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ABSTRACT

This document describes Italy's systems and procedures for certifying qualifications and skills within the public system of general education and vocational training (VT). Section 1 details the organizational structure, special features, and system of analysis and certification of student skills/qualifications in Italy's system of general education. Topics covered in the subsections are as follows: the public education system in Italy, preparatory education, compulsory schooling, primary education, first- and second-degree secondary education, technical education, vocational education, art education, ongoing education and training for adults, the university system, and Italy's universities within the European Community context. Presented in section 2 is information on the following aspects of Italy's VT system: the role of the state in terms of labor and employment policy, structure and organization of the regional system of VT, management of the regional system of VT, the corporate system of VT, and managerial and entrepreneurial training. The conclusion discusses the importance of giving consideration to the increasingly fluid system of new professions and the resultant opportunity to work toward closer adjustment of levels of vocational and academic qualifications. Appended are a list of abbreviations, 38 references, and glossary. (MN)

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Systems and procedures of certification of qualifications in Italy

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Systems and procedures for the certification of qualifications

National monographs

In the context of preparation by the social partners of a "joint opinion on occupational qualifications and certification" (adopted on 3 July 1992), the Centre has been asked to undertake comparative analysis of systems and procedures for certification currently being applied within the European Communities. The authors of the monographs on the national training systems, another area of CEDEFOP's work, and who are in an ideal position to acquire information, have for the most part been asked to carry out this work.

National reports have now been concluded in the original language and are currently being translated. We are pleased to present these in a new publication series

"CEDEFOP Panorama"

These may be obtained free of charge upon request from CEDEFOP.

In these publications the authors, after making brief reference to the characteristics of the general and vocational training systems in their countries, describe all aspects of how qualifications are certified:

- formulation and introduction of certificates, qualifications and diplomas: the relevant institutions, procedures, tripartite or joint consultation or decision-making commissions;
- access to qualifications: conditions, means, motives, channels;
- certification: aims, contents, means, procedures;
- usefulness, use, trends and problems.

To keep up to date with national situations which are in a constant state of flux, the Centre would be grateful for reader's comments.

Cross-reference reading of the twelve monographs to formulate a synthesis report and a summary table is being carried out by a European institute specialized in international comparison of education and vocational training systems.

Maria Pierret
July 1993

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ITALY AND ITS REGIONS

Presentation of the research

This research, intended for the "citizen of Europe" as final user, describes the Italian systems and procedures for the certification of qualifications and skills within the public system of general education and vocational training. Its two main sections will cover the "state of the art", and its concluding pages will present tendencies and prospects.

*The **first section** features the governing structures involved in the areas of interest. There are essentially two fundamental decision-making instances: the Ministry of Public Education, responsible for general education to the end of secondary school and the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research, which manages the university system and state-run research organizations, most of them associated to universities.*

After describing the governing structures of the systems, we will analyze the various subsystems of public education; with their organizational structure, we will present the system of analysis and certification of results as well as the validity of diplomas as prerequisites for further studies or for entry into active life in the private sector or in the civil service. We will follow the same structure for the university system, which is more autonomous nowadays and more strongly involved with the function of scientific and technological research as well as by an increase in European interchanges. For this subsystem we will once again cover the organs of central and peripheral administration, the university governing bodies and the general standards involved, also taking into account specific forms of autonomy granted by law to each university for the organization of studies, evaluation of results, certification of diplomas received and their validity for entry into active life or for the exercise of specific professions.

*The **second section** will deal with the system of vocational training, where possible using a structure parallel to that of the first section. The vocational training system has been analyzed in the light of its two main stages of evolution: one from the foundation of the Republic (1948) until 1978, dominated mainly by the State, and the other after the implementation of framework Law no. 845 of 21 December 1978 on vocational training, which ratified the definitive transfer of jurisdiction from the State to the Regions and, through them, to local authorities delegated by them or to third parties. We have attempted to define the handling of problems and, even at the risk of over-simplification, the complexity of the field due to the intertwinement of jurisdiction of the State, the Regions, the local authorities, the third parties as well as enterprises and trade unions. The focus is therefore the analysis of the various systems and procedures of certification adopted at the various moments of a working person's life cycle: from the moment in which he intends to qualify as a worker to the various modalities through which his qualifications and vocational skills can be recognized by means of "official" certificates before he enters active life or at a later point.*

*The **conclusion** will demonstrate the importance of taking into account the increasingly fluid system of new professions, the opportunity of taking important steps towards a closer adjustment of levels of vocational and academic qualifications, because we believe that the free movement of workers, goods and capital will be improved if it is flanked by in-depth cultural exchange: free movement of "the learned" constitutes the best chance for a Europe without borders.*

SECTION I

THE PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM

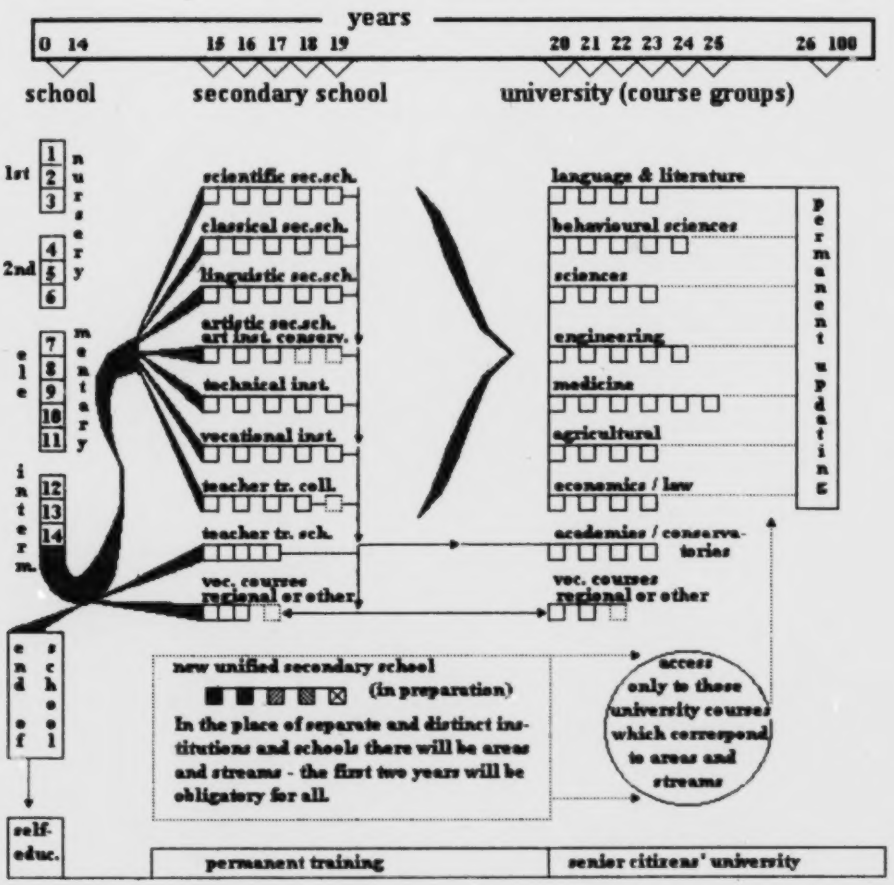
1. The public education system in Italy

Education in Italy is centralized, and controlled by the State through two separate ministries: the Ministry of Public Education, which administers nursery school, compulsory schooling and secondary school, and the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research, which administers universities and research institutes.

This section is, therefore, divided into two sub-sections: the first one will deal with issues connected to the education system at its various levels, which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Education; the second will present issues related to the university system, which, although closely connected to and directly following the school system, is the responsibility of the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research.

To clarify the interrelationships involved in the system, it would appear useful to show the various school levels by means of a graph.

Graphic representation of the school system



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1.1 Evolution of the school system in recent decades (1948-1992)

1.1.1
Article 34 of the Constitution of the Italian Republic stipulates that "schools are open to all. Early education, given for a minimum of eight years, is obligatory and free. Those who are able and deserving, even if lacking the financial means, shall have the right of access to higher levels of studies. The Republic shall bring this right to effect by means of scholarships, family allowances and other forms of assistance, which must be granted by competition".

1.1.2
Furthermore, the Constitution acknowledges the principle of pluralism in education; it gives the Republic the duty of establishing "general norms regarding education" and of creating state schools; it also allows organizations and private bodies to establish schools and educational institutions, without burden to the State. In establishing the rights and obligations of non-governmental schools requesting parity, the Law must grant these institutions complete freedom of existence and their pupils a treatment equivalent to that of pupils in government-run schools.

1.1.3
At the conclusion of the reorganization phase, and when the economic, political and socio-cultural conditions had been created, the State put the constitutional requirement into effect; **Law no. 1859 of 31 December 1962** merged intermediate schools and vocational education schools, thus establishing the "single intermediate school", and raised the age limit of compulsory schooling to fourteen years.

1.1.4
Another step reducing the gap between utilitarian schools and general education schools was achieved with **law no. 754 of 27 October 1969**, which introduced experimental supplementary courses in vocational institutes, so as to provide access to university from these institutions (**law no. 692 of 14 September 1970** extended these norms to art institutes as well).

1.1.5
Law no. 119 of 1969 regulated the organization of final examinations in upper secondary school. One consequence of this process is **Law no. 910 of 11 December 1969** on "urgent measures for universities", allowing graduates of all four and five-year secondary schools (the former must attend an additional one-year "supplementary" course) to register in any university faculty, without any selection limitation.

1.1.6
Opening universities to all secondary school graduates had a significance similar to the unification of intermediate schools. For the first time in the history of our school regulations, the dichotomy between pre-university schools and pre-vocational schools, which

had been one of the fundamental characteristics of our school system, was definitively broken, at least on an administrative level.

1.1.7
This gave rise to a need to revise the concept of the "division" of secondary education into a number of parallel and separate schools which had been created in function of university.

1.1.8
In summary, beside the lengthening of compulsory schooling effected in 1962, another major step was **Law no. 477 of 30 July 1973**, enacted under delegate power, and of the subsequent **Decrees of the President of the Republic, nos. 416, 417, 418, 419, 420 of 31 May 1974 ("delegated decrees")**, which constitute the "magna carta" of innovation in school organization and in school roles and functions, and established experimentation and collective administration as the two motors of development.

1.1.9
Since 1974, parents and pupils have been called upon to participate in **school management**; the powers of school headmasters have been reduced and in part delegated to various collective organs; the country has been sub-divided into various units, and school administration has been decentralized (district and provincial school councils, etc.).

1.1.10
Therefore, while the school system was formerly structured "vertically", it is now, as a result of the participation of parents, students, non-teaching personnel, local authorities (municipal government, provinces and Regions) and other social and cultural forces through the organisms provided for by law, inserted in the social reality of the country.

1.2 Structure and organization of the school system

1.2.1 The Ministry of Public Education

The Ministry of Public Education is the central administrative organ of public education. Its jurisdiction extends to the entire national territory, to the intermediate and peripheral administration of public education itself; it covers nursery schools, primary schools, first and second-degree secondary schools, including art schools and boarding schools.

1.2.2 The upper hierarchy: the Minister and the Under-secretaries of State

The upper echelon of the hierarchy consists of the Minister, assisted by one or more Under-secretaries of State. The latter have no jurisdiction of their own but are assigned special functions by the Minister. The Minister represents the will of the State within the educational sector and in the sector's external relation to third parties.

1.2.3
The Minister directs, coordinates and supervises the various areas of ministerial jurisdiction; in particular, he is responsible for the political organization of the administration, the management and the assessment of the public education system, for the coordination of intermediate and peripheral administration, as well as for the central and peripheral inspectorate functions, the correct administration of examinations of all types and levels (excluding university examinations), the certification of diplomas granted at the end of primary education and first and second-degree secondary education in all areas of study.

1.2.4
For general administrative and managerial acts, the Minister is assisted by the administrative council, the disciplinary commission, the national council of public education, the central book-keeping department, technical inspectors and other staff.

1.2.5
On a technical level, the upper hierarchy of the Ministry is structured in departments collaborating directly with the Minister and the Under-secretaries; these are the Minister's Cabinet and the Minister's and the Under-secretaries' Private Secretariats. Directly accountable to the Minister are the Office of Studies, Programmes and Methods as well as the general directorates, the inspectorates and the Nursery School Service.

1.2.6 The general directorates

There are eight general directorates, responsible for: primary education, first-degree secondary education, technical education, classical, scientific and teacher training education, vocational education, cultural exchanges, non-governmental secondary education.

1.2.7 The functional relationship between the P.E. Ministry and other ministries

On a central level, the administration of public education is the responsibility of:

- the Ministry of Public Education for matters regarding nursery schools, primary schools and first and second-degree secondary schools;
- the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research for the promotion of "scientific and technological research as well as the development of universities and other institutes of higher education";
- the Ministry of Defence for military schools;
- the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for Italian schools abroad.

1.2.8
The intermediate structure of public education consists of school superintendencies, local education offices and school districts.

1.2.9 The peripheral administration of public education

The peripheral administration of public education consists of:

- the regional and interregional school offices, headed by superintendents, who are in charge of school construction, an area which was almost totally transferred to the Regions after 1975. They may be called upon to express opinions on the establishment of new districts and on urgent requests regarding the construction of schools.
- the local education offices, located in every provincial chief town and headed by Senior Directors, to whom are accountable the officials and other employees of the provincial school offices as well as the headmasters (first and second-degree secondary schools) and didactic directors (primary schools) of the state schools in the province involved.

1.2.10 The local education offices

The local education offices manage the entire administrative, organizational and didactic machinery of schools in one province, with powers similar to those of a corporate CEO.

1.2.11 The school districts

The school districts, which are administrative units operating in a particular area, are in charge of promoting and developing schools and other educational institutions, and of related activities, to ensure that the right to education, cultural and civic growth of the community can be fully exercised and to ensure the better functioning of school services.

1.2.12

School districts are administratively autonomous and manage the funds for their operation.

1.3 Quantitative aspects of the school system

1.3.1 Quantitative aspects

The number of persons in the education system (according to the estimates included in the 25th census report on the social situation of the country, 1991) exceeds 11 million, which represents 19 % of the total population. It is distributed as follows:

schools	**pupil numbers**
nursery schools	1,552,694
primary schools	3,055,883
intermediate schools	2,265,947
secondary schools	2,860,983
total, school system	**9,735,507**
universities	1,334,821
overall total	**11,070,328**

2. Preparatory education

2.1 Nursery school

Pre-school education is given to children aged between three and six. It takes place in nursery schools and is non-compulsory and free. According to the latest guidelines, confirmed by the Ministerial Decree of 3 June 1991, "Infants' schools contribute, within the scope of the education system, to the promotion of the overall development of the child's personality (...), with the aim of forming free human beings, responsible and active participants in the life of the local, national and international community".

2.1.1
On a didactic level, "the aim of [nursery school education] is the development of capacities and skills of a communicative, expressive, logical and operative nature as well as a well-balanced development and organization of the cognitive, affective, social and moral components of the personality, thus contributing to the realization of the principle of equality of educational opportunities".

2.1.2
Nursery school sections, such as provided for in the annual plan and subject to the approval of the Minister of Public Education and the Minister of Finance and as a response to well-grounded proposals from the local education offices, are created on a provincial level and through decree of the local education offices.

3. Compulsory schooling

Compulsory schooling currently applies to children between 6 and 14 years of age (or 15 without an intermediate leaving certificate), for a total of eight years; however, the proposed legislation on the reform of upper intermediate schools will extend compulsory schooling to ten years.

3.1
Since 1 October 1963, compulsory schooling has consisted of two cycles: primary school (5 years) and intermediate school (3 years), each with distinct characteristics, training objectives, methods and contents.

3.2
Compulsory schooling is considered fulfilled when:

a) the pupil has achieved an intermediate leaving certificate prior to his/her 15th birthday:

b) without having achieved this certificate, the pupil has attended a public school for eight years by his/her 15th birthday:

c) if the pupil has not attended a public school, evidence is provided that he/she has received compulsory schooling for at least eight years prior to his/her 15th birthday.

4. Primary education

Primary education constitutes the first phase of compulsory schooling.

4.1 Administration

The administration of primary education is the responsibility of the Didactic Circles. These are peripheral organs of public education having their own operative units and complex functions in both the administrative and didactic areas. These units represent territorial sub-divisions within a province and within each school district; they are independent in terms of administrative and didactic operational expenditure.

4.1.2
Each circle is administered by a didactic director with the assistance of the teachers, one of whom is appointed as a deputy.

4.1.3
Primary education is responsible for "initial literacy" within the scope of a continuing educational process which also includes nursery school and intermediate schooling.

4.1.4 The school year

For the teaching personnel, the school year begins on 10 September and ends on 9 August (Law no. 517 of 4 August 1977, art. 11). It has 215 effective teaching days, from September to June, with variations of a few days according to regional school calendars.

4.1.5
Primary education is divided into teaching grades (from first to fifth). It lasts a total of five school years and may not be shortened.
Registration into first grade is open to children who have turned six, and must be done by the child's parents or their representatives.

4.1.6
Each class can have no more than 25 pupils, 20 if some of them are handicapped.

4.2 The didactic cycles

Primary education, by virtue of the reform of 1955 and confirmed by the reform of 1985, is sub-divided into two cycles, not in a legal sense, but "according to a pedagogical logic which may not be the same for all pupils and all teachers".

4.2.1
It was deemed useful to consider the first and second years (**first cycle**) as a phase of

observation and development of basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic, in written and oral spontaneous creative expression; the third, fourth and fifth years **(second cycle)** constitute the first organic approach to a curriculum offering a certain degree of variety (the single teacher of the first cycle is joined by other teachers who complement the one-stream curriculum with, for instance, the first foreign language, a science laboratory, etc.), and above all setting specific goals and objectives in terms of the knowledge, skills and division of knowledge which must be achieved by each and every pupil.

4.2.2
As a consequence of the reform enacted during the 1990-1991 school year, the number of weekly teaching hours is 27, and it can be raised to a maximum of 30 to include foreign language teaching.

4.2.3
For the last few years, "full-time" elementary education has been available in cases where conditions and pupil numbers have made it desirable. This system runs 5 days per week with morning and afternoon teaching sessions; it includes a school lunch, available for a "political" price set on a year-to-year basis by the municipal authorities.

4.2.4
The duration of "full-time" school, however, cannot exceed 37 hours per week, including the interval between the morning and afternoon sessions. The overall level of pupils in the various curricular disciplines is expressed by an assessment of admission to the examination at the end of the five-year period.

4.3 Evaluative aspects and examinations

Passage from one grade to the next is determined by means of an assignment of marks with the assessment "admission" or "non-admission to the next grade", which is recorded in an evaluation certificate sent to the parents.

4.3.1
The assignment of marks generally occurs during the last week of classes, and results are published within the time limit stipulated by the school calendar.

4.3.2 Examination subjects

The examination subjects for the primary leaving certificate, which evolve after the transition from the pre-discipline environment of the first cycle to the progressively varying disciplines of the second cycle, are the following: Italian language; mathematics; science; history-geography-social studies and knowledge of social life; sound and music education; physical education; religion.

4.3.3 The examination commission

The examination commission consists of the teacher or teachers who have taught the class, plus two teachers chosen by the teaching staff and appointed by the didactic director. The commission also includes the support teacher in the case of pupils where support teaching activities have been carried out. The commission operates on a collective basis, after having chosen a coordinator among its members.

4.3.4 The examination procedure

The examination consists of two written tests: Italian composition and mathematics. The written section is followed by an oral interview, based not so much on the reproduction of parts or chapters of material but rather on a presentation by the pupil of one or two research projects carried out in the various disciplines and on the discussion of these projects.

4.3.4.1
The criteria for success are associated, in the composition, to subjective variables regarding creativity, originality, liveliness of presentation, and to more objective variables such as accuracy of spelling, syntax and vocabulary; in mathematics to the level of logical and algorithmic comprehension of a problem and thus to the accuracy of the operative process, both formal and substantial.

4.3.4.2
The criteria for success in the oral interview are the ability to present a research or study topic without following a text, demonstrating mastery of linguistic instruments: correct periods and propositions in structure, appropriate vocabulary, immediacy and fluency of communication.

4.3.4.3
Pupils successfully completing the examination are granted the primary leaving certificate bearing an assessment expressed by one of the following adjectives: excellent, good, sufficient. This assessment constitutes a certificate of admission to intermediate school. Non-admissions are rare, and failures in the primary leaving examination are practically non-existent.

5. First-degree secondary education: intermediate school

First-degree secondary education extends over three years (from the age of 11 to 14) and aims at promoting the formation of the pupil and assisting his/her orientation in terms of subsequent vocational and academic choices, starting with the discovery of the environment (first year), the discovery of others (second year), and the discovery of oneself and one's own inner life (third year).

5.1 Didactic organization

Attendance is obligatory and free for all for three years.

5.1.1
The first reform of intermediate schools, carried out in 1962, covered the unification of the primary school system; the June 1977 reform introduced technical teaching and music as compulsory subjects, while Latin ceased to be compulsory.

5.1.2
Another interesting aspect of intermediate school is the inter-disciplinary approach which teachers - now several of them for one class and each in charge of specific subjects or groups of homogeneous subjects - must attempt to implement by means of supplementary activities within one class or between classes, developing common projects and experiments with other classes at the same year level.

5.1.3 The subjects and the timetable

The following subjects are taught: religion, Italian, history, civic education and geography, foreign language (English and French or German), mathematical, chemical, physical and natural sciences, technical education, art education, musical education, physical education.

5.1.3.1
There are 30 hours of teaching per week. Here too, as in the model described for primary school, it is possible to structure teaching activities "on a full-time basis" if needs and conditions should make this desirable.

5.2 Evaluative aspects and examinations

One of the most significant reforms affecting intermediate school concerns the system of evaluation during and at the conclusion of this three-year period (Law no. 517 of August 1977). This law abolished the resit examinations formerly held between intermediate school years, requiring from teachers rather than an analytical assessment on the pupil's

success in a particular subject a collective assessment on his/her level of general maturity, taking into account the level of knowledge acquired in the subject in question.

5.2.1
This law also reviewed the specific merit of various ways of expressing evaluation: it ratified the abolition, for the entire duration of compulsory schooling, of the system of marks from 0 to 10, instituting in its place a system of "assessments", more work for the teacher but better suited to guide the pre-adolescent child's development.

5.2.2
The report card has thus been replaced by an evaluation report. The attention of each teacher is therefore directed towards parameters on attitudes, tendencies and behaviour patterns which motivate success or cause failure; this furnishes useful diagnoses not only for the pupil, but also for his/her parents, who are then in a better position to discuss with the teacher during the teacher-parent meetings. An important part of the evaluation report is the space reserved for the comprehensive assessment of the teachers as a group, which synthesizes the child's overall state of progress and maturity, his/her level of motivation, cooperation and participation in the school system.

5.2.3 The personal report and evaluation certificate

On the basis of Law no. 517 of 4 August 1977, the report, in two parts, covers:
a) in the first part, "the pupil's registration and school data and any other remarks useful for the evolution of the educational activity";
b) in the second part, the pupil's participation to school life, the elements deduced from systematic observations of the learning process and degree of maturity, as well as periodic - in three or four month periods - evaluations on the global level of maturity achieved and the supplementary school activities, if any. The first part of the report is normally compiled by the school secretariat, whereas the second part " ... is the result of the conscientious determination of the teacher" or, in the case of secondary school, of the Class Council.

Usually the report is delivered every four months and the last report is the end-of-year report, which ratifies the pupil's "admission" or "non-admission" to the next year of the level.

5.2.4
Passage from one year to the next, as in primary school, is determined by means of an assignment of marks with the assessment "admission" or, in very rare cases, "non-admission to the next year", which is recorded in an evaluation certificate sent to the parents.

5.2.5
The assignment of marks, the responsibility of the Class Council, generally occurs during the last week of classes, and results are published at the same time.

5.3 The state examination

At the end of the intermediate school course, pupils take a single-session state examination leading to the intermediate leaving certificate. Pupils are admitted to this examination on the basis of an admission recommendation by the Class Council.

5.3.1 The examination commission

The examination commission is composed ex officio of all third-year teachers who teach examination subjects and a chairperson nominated by decree of the local education office and selected province-wide among a) headmasters of government-run or officially recognized intermediate schools; b) teachers deputized to head the same type of schools.

5.3.2 The examination procedure

The examination has three written parts: a composition test in Italian, a foreign language test and a mathematics test. The written tests do not serve as elimination criteria for admission to the pluri-disciplinary colloquium. The commission corrects the tests on a collective basis.

5.3.3

The written examination is followed by a "pluri-disciplinary colloquium", which is a dialogue between the examination commission and individual pupils either on an interdisciplinary topic or on research conducted in the various subjects of the curriculum.

5.3.4

The commission, on the basis of the examination results, the final assignment of marks and other material at its disposal, formulates an appropriate overall assessment on a candidate's global level of maturity. This assessment, for those who are granted a leaving certificate, is summarized in one adjective: excellent, very good, good, sufficient. For negative assessments the grade given is "certificate not granted".

5.3.5 The orientation assessment

The final assessment of the admission to examination report also contains an orientation proposal to continue education, often with a distinction between streams - humanities, technical, vocational, artistic, etc. - or to go into a vocational qualification course within the regional system of vocational training with the aim of entering active life.

5.3.6 Possible choices after the certificate

At the end of these three years, pupils who pass the examination are granted an "intermediate leaving certificate" giving them access to any upper secondary school, to apprenticeships, or to vocational training courses within the regional vocational training system.

5.3.7 Legal validity of the diploma

The intermediate leaving certificate grants the basic right to participate in almost all public competitions. Indeed, relatively few public competitions require an upper secondary school leaving certificate or a university degree.

6. Second-degree secondary education: secondary school

6.1 General aspects of second-degree secondary education

A great number of streams are available in secondary education, each having different lengths and aims. These include: humanist education, divided between "licei" [upper secondary schools] offering five-year courses and "istituti magistrali" [teacher training colleges] offering four-year courses; technical education, sub-divided into various specialist streams, all lasting five years; vocational education, divided into several three or five-year streams; art education, including both "licei" and art schools and lasting three to five years.

In Italy there are 21 basic types of secondary schools offering more than one hundred specialized streams.

6.1.1 Evaluative aspects and examinations

The evaluation system uses marks (0-10).
In second-degree secondary education, the official document of a pupil's scholastic progress is the report card, issued on a three or four-month basis and at the end of the year. Report cards are produced according to a uniform regulation model and printed by the government printer.

6.1.2

Passage from one year to the next occurs on the basis of the final assigned marks.

The "declaration of approval" for passage to the next year depends on at least "sufficient" evaluation in all subjects and to a minimum mark of 8/10 in conduct.

6.1.3 Resit examinations

Resit examinations must be taken in subjects where the mark "sufficient", i.e. 6/10, has not been achieved, regardless of the number of subjects involved. However, by non-appealable decision of the Class Council, pupils who were given less than 6/10 in conduct or who have demonstrated severe inadequacies in most subjects are not admitted to the resit examinations at the autumn session and are, therefore, forced to repeat the year.

The autumn resit examination session consists of written, graphic or practical, and oral tests in the subjects concerned.

The adjudication commissions in resit examination sessions are constituted of the members of the Class Council.

6.2 The matriculation examination

At the end of the secondary school course, pupils take a single-session state examination leading to a matriculation diploma in the various streams. Pupils are admitted to the examination on the basis of a favourable judgement by the Class Council at the time of the final assignment of marks. The basic aim of the matriculation examination is a global evaluation of the personality of the candidate considered with regard to his/her cultural and vocational orientation.

6.2.1 The examination commission

The commission has a "national" character: it is composed of five examiners from institutes situated in other Regions, coordinated by a chairperson (normally a university professor or the headmaster of a secondary institution). All examiners are appointed by the Ministry. One of the examiners is a teacher at the institution of the class being examined (the so-called "internal member"). This examiner's functions are more supportive than evaluative: he gives the commission a better comprehension of the programme covered and the characteristics of the pupils. He is selected by the Class Council and appointed by the headmaster of the institution.

6.2.2 The examination procedure

The matriculation examination is held according to a canonical procedure for all second-level secondary schools.
The two written tests (the composition in Italian and a different special test for every stream) are received directly from the Ministry in sealed envelopes; the seals are removed in the presence of the examination candidates, two of whom are chosen as witnesses to sign a declaration that the envelopes containing the tests were intact. The written tests do not serve as elimination criteria for admission to the pluri-disciplinary colloquium.

The written test in Italian consists of a selection among at least four traditional options: classical and modern literature, contemporary literature, history, current events. One of the topics is the same for all types of schools. The test lasts six hours.

The second test varies from stream to stream. Usually it is either the solution of a technical/scientific problem or a graphic/technical problem, or the discussion of an topic taken from the final year programme. The duration of this test is usually four hours.

6.2.2.1
The written tests are followed by the oral part of the examination, which covers the entire programme of the final year in two subjects, one chosen by the pupil and one by the examination commission from a block of four subjects selected each year for each stream by the Ministry and communicated either via formal internal communication channels or through the media (television, daily newspapers) approximately three months prior to the state examination, which is officially fixed to a date between mid-June and the first of July.

The oral examination is designed to have the dignity of an "open" dialogue between the commission of examining teachers and the individual pupil, starting from an inter-disciplinary topic or from research carried out by the pupil in specific subjects of the curriculum.

6.2.2.2
The final assessment is expressed in sixtieths, and the overall final evaluation of successful candidates may not be lower than 36 sixtieths. The law stipulates that each member of the commission must express a final assessment with a mark between zero and ten, and that the final result is the sum of these partial marks. It is obvious that the final mark often corresponds to an assessment resulting from a mediating discussion under the direction of the commission chairperson. The decisions of the commission are final and there is no possibility to take the examination at a resit examination session.

6.2.2.3 The orientation assessment

The commission expresses its own evaluation of each candidate for matriculation with respect to the orientation demonstrated in terms of selection of university course. The entire commission takes part in formulating the assessment, granting the mark and evaluating the orientation. The assessment and the evaluation of the orientation are communicated to the candidate in writing at his/her request.

6.2.2.4 Validity of the matriculation diploma

The matriculation diploma gives access to all university faculties, with the exception of those excluded by law for a particular stream, or direct access to apprenticeships or to work/training contracts, or to second-level regional vocational training courses, as we will see in more detail in the section on vocational training.

Any type of matriculation diploma grants the basic right to participate in public competitions, according to the particular stream required by the announcement.

6.3 The vocational qualification examination

State technical and vocational institutes for agriculture, industry and crafts, for social services and for marine activities grant a special qualification diploma which can be acquired through an intermediate state examination.

For access to qualification courses, pupils must have an intermediate leaving certificate and, in a few cases specified by law, such as marine activities, a stipulated level of physical fitness.

6.3.1
Passage from one year to the next is determined by means of a final assignment of marks, and, in the autumn session, promotion in the subjects that have had to be repeated.

However, as in all secondary schools, pupils who were given less than 6/10 in conduct or who have demonstrated severe inadequacies in most subjects are not admitted to the resit examinations at the autumn session and are, therefore, forced to repeat the year. This decision, taken by the Class Council, is not open to appeal.

The autumn resit examination session consists of written, graphic, or above all practical tests as well as oral tests in the subjects concerned.

The adjudication commissions in resit examination sessions are constituted of the members of the Class Council.

Vocational institutes may, until the reform of second-degree secondary education, establish special experimental post-qualification courses, for which the normal prerequisite is the corresponding qualification diploma.

Following is a list of qualifications granting access to the post-qualification courses offered by the vocational institutes.

Post-qualification course	**Prerequisite qualification**
1. Agro-technician	All qualifications issued by vocational institutes for agriculture
2. Accounting analyst	Company accounting clerk (and company accountant)
	Company secretariat clerk (and company secretary)
	Transport and removal clerk
	Foreign trade operator
3. Children's community assistant	Nursery school assistant (three-year section)
4. Ceramic industry chemist	Ceramic chemist
	Industrial ceramist
5. Fashion stylist	Women's seamstress
	Children's seamstress
	Fashion designer
	Garment pattern designer (three-year)
6. Dental technician	Dental technician

7. Commercial operator	Company accounting clerk (and company accountant)
	Company secretariat clerk (and company secretary)
	Tourist agency clerk
	Commercial correspondent in foreign languages
	Shorthand-typist in foreign languages
8. Commercial operator for food products	Employee in conservation and distribution of food products
9. Tourist operator	Tourist agency clerk
	Commercial correspondent in foreign languages
	Shorthand-typist in foreign languages
	Company secretariat clerk (and company secretary)
	Tourist escort
	Hotel secretariat and administration clerk
	Hotel services employee
	Hotel porter services employee
	Hotel kitchen services employee (three-year)
	Restaurant and bar hotel services employee (three-year)
	Company accounting clerk
10. Optician	Optician
11. Administrative secretary	Company accounting clerk (and company accountant)
	Company secretariat clerk (and company secretary)
	Tourist agency clerk
	Commercial correspondent in foreign languages
	Shorthand-typist in foreign languages
12. Graphic and publicity technician	Publicity designer
	Ceramist
	Sales clerk and shop-window decorator
13. Chemical industry technician	Chemical operator
	Chemical-biological laboratory assistant
	Chemical-biological operator
14. Electrical / electronic industry technician	Board electrician
	Board radio-telegraph operator
	Board refrigerator technician
	Maritime traffic master
	Low-voltage fitter
	Motor-vehicle electrician
	Technician for electrical equipment
	Technician for electronic equipment
	Radio fitter and repairman

	Television fitter and repairman
	Telephone systems fitter
	Medical radiology technician
	Digital systems technician for automated processes
	Computer maintenance technician
	Electric and electronic equipment fitter
15. Mechanical industry technician	Fitter
	Turner
	Mechanic assembler
	Motor-vehicle repair mechanic
	Plastics moulding technician
	Textile technician
	Mining technician
	Mechanic designer
	Naval mechanic
	Water, heating and sanitary systems fitter
	Maritime traffic master
	Automotive body designer
	Optician
	Tool maker
	etc.

6.3.2 The examination commission

The qualifying examinations take place in a single session. The commissions are nominated by the headmaster, communicated to the local education office and composed of the headmaster himself, all teachers, including technical-practical staff, of the subjects of the last year of the course, provided they are examination subjects, and two experts from economic and productive categories interested in the activity of the institute, and not part of the state administration. They are nominated by the headmaster after consultation with local professional and technical organizations such as the provincial union of commercial operators, the provincial union of industrial operators, the professional associations, the port authorities, etc. Excluded from this nomination are persons involved with the institute in any way during the school year and members of the council of similar institutes.

6.3.3 The examination procedure

The exam consists of practical, graphic and written tests (according to the stream of the various qualifying sections) and of an oral test on all the subjects of the final course year, as well as, for the private candidates, subjects and parts of subjects from previous years.

6.3.3.1
The final assessment is "qualification" or "non-qualification", with individual marks expressed in tenths and the average mark as a percentage.

6.3.4 Validity of the qualification diploma

The qualification diploma, although it is not generally considered as a "qualification for admission to higher education" in the strict sense of the term, is indeed a vocational qualification which provides evidence of, above all, "practical capabilities"; it is valid:

a) for admission to executive careers in the civil service;

b) for admission to careers in responsible posts in the cases provided for by ministerial decree, upon recommendation of the Senior Council of Public Education;

c) for direct access to work within the skill level, subject to the stipulations of collective agreements for private sectors, after on-the-job training for a maximum of three months.

6.4 Academic secondary education [liceo]

6.4.1 Academic secondary education in the classical stream

The "ginnasio-liceo classico" prepares pupils for university studies. It lasts five years and includes two years of "ginnasio" (the former years IV and V of "ginnasio") and three "liceo" years. At the end of this period, pupils take a state examination and, if successful, are granted a "classical matriculation diploma".

6.4.1.1 Didactic and organizational aspects

6.4.1.1.1 Subjects and duration

The subjects taught in the senior secondary classical stream are the following: Italian language and literature; Latin language and literature; Greek language and literature; foreign language and literature (only in the "ginnasio" two-year period); history; geography (only in the "ginnasio" two-year period); philosophy (only in the "liceo" three-year period); natural sciences, chemistry and geography (only in the "liceo" three-year period); mathematics; physics (only in the "liceo" three-year period); history of art (only for the "liceo" three-year period); religion; physical education.

Experimental streams in linguistics and social pedagogics have recently been added.

There are 27 hours of teaching per week in the "ginnasio" two-year period, 28 in the first and second years of the "liceo" and 29 in the final year.

6.4.2 Academic secondary education in the scientific stream

The scientific "liceo" is oriented towards a cultural and scientific education meant to provide a basis for university studies. The course lasts five years, requires an intermediate

leaving certificate for entry and ends with a state examination which leads to the "scientific matriculation diploma".

6.4.2.1 Didactic and organizational aspects

6.4.2.1.1 Subjects and duration

The subjects taught in the senior secondary scientific stream are the following: Italian language and literature; Latin language and literature; foreign language and literature; history; geography (only in the first year); philosophy (only in the third, fourth and fifth years); natural sciences, chemistry and geography (from the second to the fifth year); mathematics; physics (only in the last three years); design; religion; physical education.

There are 25 hours of teaching per week in the first year, 27 in the second, 28 in the third and 29 in the fourth and fifth years.

6.4.3 Academic secondary education in the linguistic stream

The linguistic senior secondary institutions are non-governmental schools belonging to public or private organizations. Current rules stipulate courses lasting five years. The matriculation examination and corresponding diploma give access to all university faculties.

6.4.3.1 Didactic and organizational aspects

6.4.3.1.1 Subjects and duration

The curriculum is divided into a two and a three-year period. The subjects taught in the linguistic stream are: religion/alternative; physical education; Italian language and literature; history, civic education and geography (only in the two-year period); history and civic education (in the three-year period); Latin (only in the two-year period); first foreign language; second foreign language; philosophy, psychology and sociology (only in the three-year period); mathematics; physics; natural sciences and general geography and economics (only in the three-year period); history of art.
There are 28 hours of teaching per week in the first two years and 30 for the remaining three years. Two subjects are optional in the last three years; this means that pupils must choose a subject among those offered by the school: Latin literature, third foreign language, fundamentals of law, foreign institutions and economics, computer science.

6.5 Teacher training

6.5.1 The teacher training college

The specific task of the four-year teacher training course is the vocational preparation of primary school teachers. Admission requires an intermediate leaving certificate. At the end

of the four-years, pupils take a qualification examination for primary teaching and are granted a diploma; this gives them access to teacher training faculties, to higher institutes of physical education and to a limited number of degree courses in foreign language and literature. With Law no. 910 of 11 December 1969, and until the reform takes effect, graduates of the teacher training colleges may register in any university degree course after a one-year supplementary course.

6.5.1.1 Didactic and organizational aspects

6.5.1.1.1 Subjects and duration

The subjects taught in teacher training colleges are the following: religion; Italian language and literature; Latin language and literature; foreign language (the first two years only); philosophy and pedagogy (second to final year); psychology (second and third years only); history and geography; natural sciences, chemistry and geography; mathematics and physics; design and history of art; choir; physical education; a musical instrument (optional).

There are 32 hours of teaching per week in the first year, 34 in the second, 33 in the third and 30 in the fourth year.

6.5.1.1.2 Supplementary courses

Supplementary courses for graduates of teacher training colleges are organized by the local education offices under the didactic responsibility of the universities.

These courses are held at the teacher training colleges.

6.5.1.2.1
The didactic and cultural coordination of these courses is the responsibility of a university professor or lecturer, and they are managed by the headmasters of the institutions where they are taking place. Teachers are nominated by the local education offices.

6.5.2 Teacher training school

Teacher training schools are private, legally recognized schools which offer three-year courses preparing for nursery school teaching. At the end of the three years, an examination leads to the qualification diploma for nursery school teaching. This diploma does not give access to university.

7. Technical education

7.1 Special features

Technical institutes prepare their pupils for intermediate-level professions of a technical and administrative nature in agriculture, industry, commerce and tourism. According to legislation regarding these institutes, their objective is "to give the relevant general and specialized culture to young people who intend to exercise specific careers in the public service or to work in industry, in commerce and in the field of agricultural activities".

7.1.1 Typology and streams

There are currently 9 types of institutes, each offering different areas of specialization, to cover the vast range of qualifications required by the various sectors of public and private employment. These are:

7.1.1.1 Commercial technical institutes

The objective of commercial technical institutes is to prepare pupils for the profession of book-keeper and related jobs in public and private administrative bodies. Nowadays these institutes have the following areas of specialization: the administrative stream, the mercantile stream, specialization in foreign trade and specialization for commercial experts and programmers.

7.1.1.2 Technical institutes for surveyors

The aim of technical institutes for surveyors is to prepare pupils for the profession of surveyor and related technical jobs in public administrative bodies or in companies and private offices.

7.1.1.3 Technical institutes for company clerks and foreign language correspondents

This recently created type of institute is the result of the transformation of the vocational institutes for company secretaries, company accountants and foreign language correspondents.

7.1.1.4 Technical institutes for aeronautics

This type of institute is particularly worthy of mention because it is subject to special regulations. It prepares specialists and senior technicians in air navigation. The five-year course is divided into two distinct segments: a two-year and a three-year period. The three-year period has a double stream: one for future aircraft pilots and one for assistant pilots and navigators.

The psychological and physical prerequisites for these professions and the medical selection tests are determined by ministerial decree.

7.1.1.5 Women's technical institutes

Nowadays these institutes can be considered somewhat outdated; they aim at providing a technical and vocational preparation for professions in the social area. Today, in addition to the general course, there are special streams such as, for instance, for dieticians who can then work in crèches, company and hospital cafeterias, boarding schools, senior citizens homes, etc., or for community workers with vocational preparation for management functions in the above-listed environments.

7.1.1.6 Agricultural technical institutes

These institutes prepare pupils for specialized agricultural professions and for technical jobs in the agricultural sector, including management positions. The course normally lasts five years, six for fields such as oenology and viticulture. Other specializations include sheep farming, oil-works, fruit and vegetable growing, horticulture, gardening, zoological technology, dairy, mountain farming, tobacco farming and processing.

7.1.1.7 Industrical technical institutes

The aim of these institutes is to train industrial technicians in various areas: mechanics, electricity, electronics, computer, radio and television, chemistry, mining, textiles, graphic arts, photography, leather chemistry, nuclear chemistry, chronometry, building, industrial electronics, electric heating, food industry, etc.

7.1.1.8 Nautical technical institutes

These institutes train sea captains, machinists and naval constructors. Nowadays, this field of employment has become very broad: it also includes meteorological services, oceanographic research, marine resources management, anti-pollution services and civil protection at sea, petrol refining, power plants, port authorities, maritime agencies, maritime traffic control, civil pilot, etc.

7.1.1.9 Technical institutes for tourism

These institutes offer vocational preparation at various levels of technical and managerial competence for professions involving tourism and hotel services.

7.1.1.10 Secondary courses for full-time workers

The various technical institutes also offer evening classes for pupils who are employed during the day and a number of courses in computer science for programmers.

7.1.2 Administrative structures

In contrast to other schools, which are under the direct control of the Ministry of Public Education, technical and vocational institutes have a certain degree of autonomy as a result of their links with the productive sector and local economy.

The Administrative Councils of the technical institutes are responsible for the administrative and economic management of the institutes. Technical institutes have their own property and manage their own funds.

7.1.3 The technical qualification examination

At present, the five-year courses end with either a matriculation examination and/or an examination of technical qualification; the institutes then grant the relevant diploma, which entitles its holder to exercise the corresponding profession. (cf. **6.1.4** and **6.2.4**)

8. Vocational education

8.1 Special features

Vocational institutes offer a shorter preparation for qualified workers and executive personnel for the various sectors of the economy.

8.1.1
Vocational institutes were created in the 1920s as a result of private initiatives to respond to new local economic needs, in order to teach manual workers the fundamental elements of a trade. They differed from the technical institutes in terms of their aims, contents and didactic methods, the vocational institutes having a primarily practical scope.

8.1.2
Attendance at a vocational institute currently requires an intermediate leaving certificate, or, for pupils 15 years of age or older, an admission examination. Courses vary in length from 2 to 3 years depending on the various training and qualification requirements. Teaching is half theoretical and half practical.

8.1.3 "Special courses"

Pursuant to Law no. 754 of 17 October 1969, "special courses" were established on an experimental basis to accentuate the cultural component of the first two-year period of vocational courses, as well as one, two or three-year special courses extending regular attendance to five years in order to provide a level equivalent to the five-years of second-degree secondary school education.

8.1.4 Administrative structures

The vocational institutes are the most independent of all secondary schools, not only from an administrative but also from a didactic point of view. This autonomy is justified by the relationship of these institutes with the productive world and by the need to facilitate the development of in-company training periods as part of the school programme.

8.1.5 The vocational qualification examination

The five-year courses end with either a matriculation examination and/or an examination of vocational qualification; the institutes then grant the relevant diploma, which entitles its holder to exercise the corresponding profession. (cf. **6.1.4** and **6.2.4**)

9. Art education

9.1 Special features

Art education involves a number of institutions: fine arts academies, artistic secondary schools (established in 1923 and usually associated to a fine arts academy), music conservatories, art institutes, the National Academy of Dramatic Arts, the Dance Academy, the Silvio D'Amico National Academy (founded in 1935).

Courses vary in duration; they generally last three years in art schools, but art institutes offer two courses (lower and upper) of three years each and at the National Dance Academy both the classical dance course and the specialization course last eight years.

10. Ongoing education and training for adults

Adult education includes elementary education courses (first and second-cycle), courses for upgrading and improving primary education, refresher courses, reading centres and social centres of ongoing education, adult education courses, musical guidance courses, summer schools; all of these are established from year to year as needed or requested.

These are free courses held in public schools, organizations, factories, etc. Course duration varies according to programmes from a minimum of three to a maximum of 11 months. Classes are held in the daytime or in the evening and can be limited to a few days per week or to particular times of the year.

In Italy, institutions offering vocational education for adults have not achieved systematic cohesion.

The experimental courses for workers, the so-called "150 hours", are still not systematized in terms of their legal and administrative basis.

These courses, started in 1974 after an agreement between the Ministry of Public Education and the trade union organizations, give workers who do not hold an intermediate leaving certificate 150 hours per year of paid leave over a three-year period to achieve the certificate through special courses organized by the local education offices and held in public or legally recognized institutes.

These hours can be used at the level of intermediate school (remedial courses towards an intermediate leaving certificate) or at secondary school or university level (seminars on problems of industry or social reality).

The courses constitute a concrete measure to enforce the right to study and to ongoing education. The curricula are worked out directly by workers and school users and implemented according to a novel method having as its basis not a programme but the socio-economic reality in which the worker lives and works.

One risk which has become evident is the danger of cultural impoverishment in a few courses.

11. The university system

Within the Italian system as it is laid down in the Constitution, university constitutes the highest level of education. It is also the primary seat of scientific and technological research, the guarantor of the freedom of art and science, and the place where they are taught. To fulfil this purpose, universities have the right to determine their own, autonomous rules within the scope stipulated by the laws of the state.

11.1 Evolution of the university system in recent years (1980-1992)

In order to understand the current university system, it would seem useful to begin with Law no. 910 of 11 December 1969, "Urgent measures for universities", which was passed prior to the establishment of the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research. This law stipulates that, until the full effect of the university reform, the following persons may register for any degree course:

a) graduates of five-year courses at second-degree secondary institutions, including legally recognized linguistic secondary schools, and persons having completed the supplementary courses as stipulated by the law which authorizes their experimental operation in vocational institutes;

b) graduates of teacher training colleges and art secondary schools who successfully completed a one-year supplementary course organized under the scientific and didactic responsibility of a university on the basis of stipulations published every year by the Ministry of Public Education.

A second important law is no. 168 of 9 May 1989, which ratified the creation of the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research and determined its institutional objectives and areas of responsibility.

Thirdly, Law no. 235 of 7 August 1990, "Norms regarding the three-year development plan for universities and the implementation of the 1986-1990 four-year plan", formulated steps towards the establishment of first-level university diplomas at both state and private institutions.

In the fourth place, Law no. 341 of 19 November 1991, "Reform of didactic regulations", is the instrument regulating the system of academic titles and the steps leading to their acquisition.

The latest measures, passed in 1991 and 1992 and covering the right to study and the interrelation between university departments, complete the legal framework of the reform.

Among these measures, a particularly significant law is no. 390 of 2 December 1991, "Norms regarding the right to university studies", which is intended to implement the

requirements of articles 3 and 34 of the Constitution on the removal of economic and social barriers limiting the equality of citizens in their access to higher education, and in particular to ensure that those who are able and deserving, even if lacking the financial means, have the right of access to higher levels of studies.

11.2 Structure and organization of the university system

11.2.1 The Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research

The main objective of the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research is the promotion of scientific and technological research as well as the development of universities and university-level institutions of higher education.

11.2.2 The upper hierarchy: the Minister and the Under-secretaries of State

The upper echelon of the hierarchy consists of the Minister, assisted by one or more Under-secretaries of State. The latter have no jurisdiction of their own but are assigned special functions by the Minister. The Minister represents the will of the State vis-à-vis universities and in their external relation to third parties.

11.2.3

The Minister, while bound by the principles of autonomy described above, directs and coordinates universities and research centres.

In particular, he is responsible for the political organization of the administration, the management and the assessment of state university education, for the coordination of peripheral administration, as well as for the central and peripheral inspectorate functions, the correct administration of examinations of all types and academic levels, the degree diplomas, the specialization schools, the doctoral research courses, as well as the national selection procedures for hiring lecturers at the various levels of teaching as well as technical and auxiliary personnel.

The Minister exercises these functions through the preparation, every three years, of the development plan for universities, which is accompanied by a report on the state of university education taking into account reports submitted by individual universities; in this function he is advised by both the National University Council (CUN) and the standing conference of university Chancellors, which represents the various institutions.

Furthermore, every three years he reports to Parliament on the state of scientific and technological research, on the basis of reports from various research communities and organizations; he also presents a three-year programme for the development of research on the basis of opinions expressed by the National Council of Science and Technology (CNST).

And finally, the Minister coordinates activities connected to Italian participation in Community and international programmes regarding university education and scientific and technological research.

11.2.4
On a technical level, the upper hierarchy of the Ministry is structured in departments collaborating directly with the Minister and the Under-secretaries; these are the Minister's Cabinet and the Minister's and the Under-secretaries' Private Secretariats.

11.2.5
For general administrative and managerial acts, the Minister is assisted by the departments and services, the central book-keeping department and other groups, such as, for instance, the National University Council (CUN), the National Council of Science and Technology (CNST), the experts' commission for the coordination of school and university education and the conference of university Chancellors.

11.2.6 Departments and services

From an organizational point of view, the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research is divided into four departments and six services.

The departments are organizational structures on an equal level to each other and in charge of the various institutional functions of the Ministry. Their four areas of jurisdiction are planning and general coordination, university education, scientific and technological research, and international relations.

The six services exercise functions supporting the work of the various departments. Their respective areas are: support of collective bodies; the information and statistics system; studies, documentation and press; supervision of organizations; personnel; technical and administrative support.

11.2.7 The main supporting bodies: CUN and CNST

11.2.7.1 The National University Council (CUN)

The National University Council (CUN) is an elected body of Italian universities.

It exercises consultative functions with regard to all the general activities of the Minister, with regard to coordination between universities, to recruitment and the legal status of professors and university research personnel, to the distribution of funds intended to finance scientific research, to the determination and upgrading of the national guidelines regarding teaching regulations and to the development plan for universities.

11.2.7.2 The National Council of Science and Technology (CNST)

The National Council of Science and Technology (CNST) is a body selected every four years to advise the Minister and the Council of Ministers. Its specific function is to express opinions and formulate proposals with regard to the report on the state of scientific and technological research, to the planning activities, be they on a one-year or a several-year basis, regarding general, sectoral and special aspects of scientific and technological research, to the priorities and necessary resources for their implementation, to the Italian participation in international research programmes, to the proposals of the Minister to the inter-ministerial commission for economic planning (CIPE).
Its members include the Chairman of the National Research Council (CNR), the Chairman of the National Institute of Nuclear Physics (INFN), the Chairman of the Italian Space Agency (ASI), the Chairman of the historic Lincei Academy.

11.2.8 The functional relationship between the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research and other ministries

On a central level, the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research collaborates with the Ministry of Public Education, with the Ministry of Defence regarding military academies, and with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry for the Co-ordination of Community Policies with regard to Italian participation in university and scientific and technological research programmes on a Community and international level.

11.2.9 University population: quantitative aspects

The number of persons in the education system (according to the estimates included in the 25th census report on the social situation of the country, 1991) exceeds 11 million; this figure includes 1,334,821 registered university students, of which 889,343 are registered in regular courses and a considerable number - some 450,000 - are "ex-course" students.

11.3 The administrative and didactic governing bodies of universities

11.3.1 The Chancellor (Rector Magnificus)

The Chancellor is the senior official responsible for the scientific and cultural autonomy, administrative management and legal representation of every university. He is in charge of chairing the main collective bodies: the administrative council and the academic senate.

11.3.2 The administrative council

The administrative council is composed of the Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, internal representatives of the university (professors, lecturers, research personnel, non-teaching staff, students) and representatives of local public and private organizations. Among the principal duties of the administrative council are financial management functions, measures regarding the construction of university buildings, planning of research activities.

11.3.3 The academic senate

The academic senate, chaired by the Chancellor, is composed of faculty chairpersons and of the administrative director, who has a consulting role. The academic senate is directly responsible for the organization of teaching activities (preparation of overall university timetables, coordination of timetables proposed by individual faculties, determination of policy regarding the study plans of individual faculties, exercise of disciplinary powers in student matters, accuracy and validity of university courses.

11.3.4 The faculty council

This is the collective body which coordinates and directs the didactic and scientific activities of a faculty. It is chaired by the faculty dean and composed of representatives of the teaching staff in all areas. Its duties are the preparation of the annual publication of the faculty for the students, the course timetables, the review of practices regarding students, personnel matters (leaves, missions, etc.). It also makes proposals regarding modifications in the teaching regulations, proposals to the departmental bodies regarding the use of funds, of equipment and of the non-teaching staff.

11.3.5 The degree course council

This council, composed of representatives of teaching personnel in all subjects areas, non-teaching personnel and students, coordinates the study and teaching activities leading to a degree and to the diplomas stipulated by statutes; it reviews and approves study plans presented by students to achieve a diploma or degree; it submits proposals to the faculty council regarding the implementation of teaching curricula stipulated by the statutes.

11.4 University titles

Pursuant to Law no. 341 of 19 November 1990, universities grant the following diplomas:

a) university diploma (DU - diploma universitario);
b) degree diploma (DL - diploma di laurea)
c) specialized diploma (DS - diploma di specializzazione)
d) research doctorate (DR - dottorato di ricerca).

Persons who have been granted the diplomas or titles listed under b), c) and d) may use the title "dottore" in the area of the course they have taken.

11.4.1 Degree course (corso di laurea)

Degree courses aim at giving students adequate knowledge of cultural, scientific and professional methods and contents on a superior level. By law, these must take place in a university faculty and last a minimum of four to a maximum of six years.

An innovative aspect has been the creation of a special degree course - not yet implemented - in two streams for the cultural and professional training of teachers for nursery schools and elementary education, in compliance with the applicable legal norms.

11.4.2 Specialization diploma (diploma di specializzazione)

Students having completing a degree course may be granted a specialization diploma after a further course lasting for a minimum of two years and aiming at producing specialists in particular professional areas. These courses are held in so-called "specialization schools".

An innovative aspect of the law in this case is the creation of these streamed "specialization schools" which the relevant faculties and departments contribute to. Regarding the teaching faculties in particular, the universities provide training, including didactic training, for secondary school teachers, in compliance with the applicable legal norms.

11.4.3 The first-level university diploma

The most significant aspect of the law is, however, the creation of the first-level university diploma. On the basis of the above-mentioned law, this course

a) takes place in university faculties and lasts a minimum of two to a maximum of three years;
b) must correspond to the duration which will eventually be stipulated by European Community guidelines for first-level university diplomas;
c) aims at giving students the adequate knowledge of methods and the cultural and scientific contents needed to achieve the required level of training in specific professional areas.

Teaching is carried out by permanent lecturing and research staff in the same discipline or in a similar discipline belonging to the same faculty.

11.5 Didactic organization

Faculties and departments are structures which are directly in charge of subject areas and degree courses in disciplines which distinguish the faculty or the department from each other. A faculty can have several degree courses and a number of departments.

11.5.1 The academic year

The academic year begins on 1 November and ends on 31 October of the following calendar year. This time includes the teaching period, the progress examination and the degree examinations. The law stipulates that teaching periods be kept clearly apart from assessment periods.

11.5.2 Student options: the degree course and the study plan

According to his own orientation on levels a) and b), the student selects a diploma course or a degree course, the university he wishes to attend (currently from a total of about one hundred) and a study plan. It is fully permissible for students to choose a study plan different from those provided for by current didactic regulations, as long as it remains within the scope of the subjects taught at the recognized institutions. Study plans must be submitted by 31 December of each year; this means that from year to year it is possible to adjust one's own study plan.

In spite of this liberalization, study plans do, however, still entail a few conditions, such as the duration of the course and the number of examinations to be taken, and the approval of the faculty council or of the degree course council in the limited number of cases stipulated by law (agriculture and engineering).

Students who fail the required examinations at an examination session within the stipulated time (so-called "sbarramento" or "blocking" examinations) become circumstantially or structurally "ex-course" students.

11.5.3 The duration of studies in relation to selections

Strictly teaching activities take place between 6 November and 31 May of the following year. Attendance at classes is compulsory in some degree courses, as are practical exercises and traineeships (in medicine, engineering, etc.). In other faculties, particularly in the humanities area, attendance is non-compulsory.

On average, a regular diploma course lasts three years and a degree course varies between four and six years according to the subject.

In general, the humanities faculties have degree courses lasting four years; degree courses in social and economic sciences as well as in natural sciences and mathematics last five years, and in medicine and surgery a minimum of six years.

11.6 Assessment of progress

11.6.1 Progress examinations: sessions and appeals

Progress examinations, according to norms, "must be organized in such a way as to assess the intellectual maturity of the candidate and his/her basic level of preparation in the subject of the examination, without being limited to notions taught by the lecturer in the course in which the student was registered".

These examinations are held in two regular sessions and one extraordinary session. The regular sessions are summer and autumn (usually June and October), and the extraordinary session is in winter (February). During these sessions decisions are taken on "examination appeals", two for each course. However, special monthly appeals are reserved for students lacking examinations from previous course years. These appeals are considered prolongations of the regular sessions.

11.6.2 Progress examinations: knowledge of regulations

In order to take assessment tests, a student must be aware of the rules and regulations of his/her own degree course. Briefly stated, this awareness involves knowing that in order to be admitted to an examination in certain degree courses, students must provide evidence of attendance and submit an application for admission to the examination, which is done together with registration to the course; students must also know that an examination cannot be repeated once successfully taken; that examinations cannot be repeated during the same session; that examinations cannot be taken in violation of the laws governing the preparation thereto established by statute or in the student's study plan.

11.6.3 Progress examinations: the Commission and the organization of examinations

The Commissions for progress examinations are nominated by the faculty dean and composed of one official professor in the subject of the examination, who chairs the Commission, of a professor in a related subject and of an "expert on the subject". Progress examinations are public.

The examination normally consists of an oral interview on material from obligatory courses and optional courses; it can also consist of a written preparatory or "blocking" test to determine admission to oral examinations; in other cases the candidate for admission to the examination, after having been given consent to do so, is required to present a brief

written dissertation on a topic of the programme, or to have spent a successful traineeship in a laboratory, a company or a hospital.

The progress marks are recorded in a student's personal course book, countersigned by the chairman of the Commission and then entered in the examination record, a document which is kept by the university. Today it is more usual to cater to the needs of unprepared candidates rather than to reject them.

11.7 The degree examination

In order to be admitted to degree examinations, a student must have complied with a series of prerequisites:

a) first of all, he/she must have passed all the examinations stipulated by the personal study plans and by faculty statutes, or other exams considered necessary although not strictly a part of the curriculum (e.g. language examinations) and completed all research and additional or complementary traineeships;

b) secondly, he/she must have written a thesis (research or compilation) which satisfies the expectations of the lecturer in terms of its complexity and depth, and which is on an appropriate level.

At this point, and within the deadlines stipulated by the faculty, a student may write a simple letter to the university Chancellor requesting admission to the degree examination.

In order to be admitted to the examination, a candidate must have paid all fees, surtaxes and required contributions.

Within the stipulated deadlines, candidates must submit to the Chancellery office a set number of copies of his/her thesis, all of them signed. Theses written in the humanities and in social, economic or legal field often have a few hundred pages, while scientific theses tend to average about one hundred pages.

At this point, the student is given an examination date. There are two regular sessions for degree examinations, and one extraordinary session held in February.

The examination consists of a discussion of the thesis in a public session before a commission composed of eleven members, which can be reduced to a minimum of seven.

At the end of the examination the candidate is asked to leave the room and the commission determines the score in closed session. Every member of the commission has a maximum of ten points to express his/her assessment of the candidate's performance. The total maximum final score is, therefore, 110/110, to which can be added, if the thesis had the required quality, the assessment "with distinction" or "worthy of print", a decision which

must be unanimous. When the commission is ready, the candidate and the public are called back in and the candidate is given his score and officially proclaimed "dottore" in ....

In general, it can be said that the final averages achieved by students during their entire university course are of some importance in order to be given a more favourable assessment by the commission: experience has shown that there is a connection, even though it may be only indirect and difficult to quantify, between averages in progress examinations and assessments in degree examinations.

11.8 The state examination for professional qualification

According to Italian law, degrees and diplomas conferred by universities and higher education institutions only certify "academic qualification".

As a result, official qualification to exercise a profession is achieved by means of state examinations, to which candidates are admitted under the pre-requisite conditions that

a) they have been granted a degree or received the equivalent diploma from a university or another institution of higher education;

b) during their studies towards this degree, they have passed the progress examinations in the subjects specified by the relevant regulations.

Nowadays, legal stipulations require official qualification for the following professions: graduate in commercial law, registrar, attorney, notary, surgeon, pharmacist, engineer, architect, chemist, veterinarian, agronomist, forester, biologist, geologist, psychologist.

State examinations are held every year in two separate sessions set by the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research. Regulations also determine the venue of the examination, so that candidates can select one of the venues chosen.

An officially stamped application must be made to the Chairman of the examination commission within the deadlines specified by regulations and submitted to the special office established for this purpose at the faculty secretariat. In general, this is a very selective examination, as the first part (usually a written or a technical-graphic test or a diagnosis) is extremely difficult. Only candidates who have passed it with the required marks are admitted to the oral examination.

Candidates who do not pass the examination at the first session may repeat it at the second session of the same year.

Successful candidates are granted the diploma of professional qualification, which is issued by the special office.

A very recent survey carried out by CENSIS and published in early December 1992 states that there are more than one and a half million persons registered on the rolls of the various professions in Italy.

12. Universities within the European Community context

12.1 Joint study programmes

A significant aspect to be considered in the new European context is cooperation between universities in the various Member States. Agreements facilitate exchanges of both professors and students, and time spent at other universities is officially recognized.

12.1.1 Erasmus: recognition of courses among Member States

The Erasmus programme, for a duration of three years, aims at promoting this type of interchange; above all, it allows students to take courses fully recognized in at least one other Member State so that the level achieved abroad by a student can be integrated in the diploma or the academic qualification which he/she will obtain in his/her own country.

12.1.2 Academic recognition

Mobility through academic recognition of diplomas and study periods is promoted by the Erasmus programme through an annual contribution to the system of "National Information Centres for Academic Recognition", which exists in every Member State.

12.1.3 The course certificate transfer system within the European Community

The fourth type of activity within the Erasmus programme is preparation for the establishment of a system of EEC-wide experimental and voluntary transfers of course certificates. The tentative aim here is to experiment with EEC certification of higher education courses taken at universities of the Member States.

12.2 Other initiatives towards EEC-wide recognition of academic certificates

12.2.1 The Jean Monnet plan on integration of university studies

Another initiative of great significance for the unification and recognition of European university systems is the Jean Monnet plan for the integration of university studies. The Commission has been granting funds to "European chairs" and to research projects conducted in these departments on European integration.

12.2.2 The Plan to Stimulate Economic Cooperation between, and the Interchange of Researchers in, Economic Sciences

The SPES project is particularly important because it deals with one of the areas to be promoted in terms of European exchanges: the area of economic sciences.

Among other objectives, the programme intends to

a) stimulate the mobility of EEC economists through cooperation in projects of a scientific nature;

b) improve training by encouraging EEC students and research scientists to carry out their research activity in universities or centres within the EEC but outside their own countries.

The study areas or research topics viewed as being particularly relevant are those relating to the internal free trade programme of the EEC and to results of micro-economic analyses; to the economic aspects of European integration; to the main causes of economic growth in western Europe; to systematic solutions for problems in the various monetary zones and coordination of macroeconomic and fiscal policies, etc.

12.2.3 The LINGUA and TEMPUS programmes

Two other programmes for improved interchanges within the Community and between the Community and Eastern European organizations are Lingua and Tempus.

These programmes provide grants for joint European projects, for mobility among lecturers and students, as well as for complementary activities.

All these opportunities show the desirability of developing a European system for the unification of certification procedures for university qualification: this will make it possible for students and scholars to move within Europe and thus contribute to a true common enrichment.

The homogenization of culture will help remove barriers and create the conditions needed for the free circulation of "scholars" as it was known in universities of the Middle Ages, conditions which will pave the way for a renaissance of arts and sciences in the various European states and for active interchanges reaching far beyond material or geographic links, transport infrastructure, political and religious divisions and establishing, as a cornerstone of the "civil" states, the principles of fraternity, equality, liberty and tolerance.

SECTION II

THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM

Preliminary remarks

When discussing the vocational training system it is difficult to make a clear distinction between the provisions of labour legislation, which are intended to regulate the labour market, job placement and employment, from the administrative provisions regarding the delegation of functions from the State to the Regions and from special laws regarding the vocational training system either on a national or on a regional basis.

We have therefore attempted to take into account institutional, historical, logical and functional aspects in our treatment of the subject, emphasizing the more relevant aspects from time to time as necessary.

The key to reading this section is based on an understanding of the provisions of the Italian Constitution, of the situation prior to the framework law, characterized by the predominant role played by the State in the management of the sub-system of vocational training and, then, of the special provisions contained in the framework law and in subsequent regional laws, in which the predominant role in managing the system of vocational training is played by the Regions, by the local authorities delegated to do so and by other bodies with whom arrangements have been made.

13. The role of the State in terms of labour and employment policy

Provisions regarding vocational training were born with the Italian Constitution.

The starting point is, then, the text of the Constitution regarding regional legislative functions (Article 117).

Article 117 of the Constitution states that in particular areas the Regions shall issue "legislative norms within the limits of the fundamental principles established by the laws of the State, and always providing that the norms themselves are not in conflict with the national interest or the interests of other Regions" in fulfilment of Article 118 of the Constitution.

13.1 Structure and organization of the system of policies regarding labour, employment and social security

13.1.1 The Ministry of Labour and Social Security

The Ministry of Labour and Social Security is the central administrative body responsible for labour issues. Its jurisdiction extends to the entire national territory, and it is also in charge of relations with the outside. It therefore has relations with the Parliament, with the Government and with international organizations. It issues general guidelines and programmes of principles, and it establishes priorities regarding activities; it chairs the Central Employment Commission; it approves the budgets and reports of the "Fund for the vocational training of workers" and of other special management units; it approves the distribution of vocational training funds to the various Regions and determines the quota of contributions to the Regions for the courses financed by this fund; it approves national and provincial plans for State-run courses and for open laboratories as well as their financing; it carries out activities falling under the provisions of the European Social Fund (ESF); it adopts measures in issues regarding cooperation.

13.1.2 The upper hierarchy: the Minister and the Under-secretaries of State

The upper echelon of the hierarchy consists of the Minister, assisted by one or more Under-secretaries of State. The latter have no jurisdiction of their own but are assigned special functions by the Minister. The Minister represents the will of the State within the sector and in the sector's external relation to third parties.

13.1.3

On a technical level, the upper hierarchy of the Ministry is structured in departments collaborating directly with the Minister and the Under-secretaries; these are the Minister's

Cabinet and the Minister's and the Under-secretaries' Private Secretariats. Directly accountable to the Minister are the Legislative Office, the Press Office, the Office for Regional Relations, the Standing Conference for the coordination of legislative and administrative activities of the Ministry, the Centre of Labour Economics, the technical secretariats.

13.1.4 The General Directorates and the "auxiliary" collective bodies

The administrative structure of the Ministry of Labour includes, on a central level, six General Directorates: the General Directorate for general affairs and personnel; the General Directorate for labour relations; the General Directorate for employment; the General Directorate for social security and social welfare; the General Directorate for cooperation; the General Directorate for orientation and workers' vocational training; the General Directorate for the orientation of the labour market.

The central administrative structure of the Ministry also includes two so-called "auxiliary" collective bodies: the Administrative Council and the Disciplinary Commission.

13.1.5 The peripheral administrative bodies

The peripheral administrative bodies of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security are:

1. *The regional labour and maximum employment offices* (numbering 20 and located in each regional capital)

2. *The provincial labour and maximum employment offices*, located in each provincial capital and mainly responsible for worker placement, recruitment of emigrating workers, study and research on problems inherent to orientation and vocational training

3. *The zonal, municipal and district manpower placement services*, whose institutional function is mediation between job offers from companies and the demand for work from unemployed persons or workers looking for new jobs

The main activities of the manpower services consist of:

a) keeping records of unemployed persons looking for jobs
b) regularly preparing and publishing general and partial lists regarding various professions
c) accepting job offers from companies
d) looking for manpower through other offices if workers cannot be found locally
e) preparing various statistics on a regular basis

4. *The regional and provincial labour inspectorates*, in charge of verifying compliance with all labour and social security laws by companies or in any situation where salaried

work is being carried out, excluding exceptions stipulated by the law; of the due implementation of collective agreements; of supplying information on the correct application of laws in terms of labour and social security; of verifying hygienic and sanitary conditions and the correct implementation of regulations regarding information and individual and collective accident prevention in industrial environments; of carrying out surveys commissioned by the Ministry on technical and hygienic conditions in individual industrial sectors, on the labour code and remuneration; on worker numbers and working condition, etc.

5. *The central medical inspectorate*, located in Rome, in charge of coordinating and managing labour in terms of the application of hygienic and sanitary regulations for the benefit of workers and of organizing, where necessary and in collaboration with the labour inspectorate of the district, surveys on working conditions.

The duties of this inspectorate also include expressing technical opinions on subjects brought up by outside parties and on measures regarding industrial hygiene and obligatory insurance against occupational diseases: silicosis, asbestosis, etc.; contributing to the improvement of law bills and to a better formulation of regulations regarding industrial hygiene and occupational diseases; planning legislative projects on insurance and physical protection of workers, including radiation protection for workers in areas where ionizing radiation is a risk.

After the establishment of the National Sanitary Service, the duties of the labour inspectorates regarding prevention of occupational diseases and maintenance of cleanliness, hygiene and safety in industrial environments were transferred to the Regions, and from the Regions to the Local Sanitary Units.

6. *The special office for the placement of workers in the entertainment industry*, which operates on a national and local level.

7. *The emigration centres*, which provide help to workers emigrating or returning and to their families. Today's activities, as in all Member States, deal more with the management of the severe problems relating to immigration, particularly from countries of the Mediterranean basin, the southern hemisphere and Eastern Europe.

13.2 The formation of the employment contract: placement

Law no. 264 of 29 April 1949 and its subsequent amendments and supplements ratified the decision for a **public employment system**, administered by peripheral bodies of the Ministry of Labour on regional, provincial and municipal levels, but also the parallel process of the development of a system of vocational training with a sub-system of vocational instruction organized by the Ministry of Public Education.

13.2.1 The placement procedure

The entry of an individual into working life is ratified by a series of administrative acts which lead to the following administrative process:

A) Application for registration in the job seekers' list: To be accepted, this application requires the following: residency, minimum age of fifteen in industry and fourteen in other non-industrial activities, possession of an employment record card or substitute certificate, physical fitness (for a few particular jobs).

B) Registration in the job seekers' list.

C) Vocational classification: Workers registered on the job seekers' list must be grouped according to production sectors, and within these sectors according to the vocational category corresponding to the qualification of the registered person.

This qualification is assessed on the basis of *very generic criteria*, i.e. on the basis of education or trade certificates, of the data on the employment record card, of the results of an interview between officials and the worker, as stipulated by the guidelines of the Ministry.

D) Hiring priority lists: these are constantly updated by employment authorities, taking into account the opinion of commissions, and in particular the following evaluation criteria:

1. the worker's family situation
2. his economic situation
3. any other element necessary to assess a person's need for work

In the case of equal classification according to the above criteria, first consideration must be given to job-seekers longest on the list and holding vocational training qualifications.

E) Request from job offerer: This is required from all private employers and from the civil service for all jobs for which a public competition is not mandatory. The request may be in terms of numbers or by name depending on the qualification needed or employment conditions. Exceptions regarding request by name concern the members of the immediate family of the job offerer, workers in responsible positions, as well as limited categories of highly specialized workers determined by decree of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security after consultation with the Central Placement Commission.

F) Filling positions: This is done on the basis of the number and type of workers requested and after it has been ensured that the working conditions offered are in line with applicable collective agreements and contractual wage levels. The placement office informs the requesting employer that a position is being filled by way of the administrative act of "allocation" in cases of numerical requests and by means of the executive act of "authorization" in cases of nominal requests.

13.2.2 Special lists for young people aged between 15 and 29

In addition to the normal lists, special lists can be established, e.g. for young people pursuant to extraordinary provisions for the employment of young people aged between 15 and 29, as was done pursuant to Law no. 285 of 1 June 1977 and other subsequent laws.

13.2.3 The employment record card

The employment record card is the basic document needed by a person wanting to enter working life. The employment record card was established in order to eliminate the large number of certificates connected to the working person, to facilitate assessments by employers and government placement offices and to prevent hiring without the authorization of the placement office.

The employment record card is issued by the mayor, who in this function exercises a government service.

The employment record card includes general data regarding its applicant, later holder: address, education level, military status, medical certificate in stipulated cases and vocational qualification if already acquired at the time of application, number and age of children. The information contained is merely simple information which can guide, but not force the administrative authorities or the employer.

Once a person has been hired, the employer adds information to the employment record card, thus exercising a government service as a private person. This information covers:
a) general data on the employer and his company, the skill level and remuneration of the worker, the professional association of which the worker is a member, any accidents and illnesses, the number of the invalidity and old age insurance policy
b) the effective duration and nature of the employment relation entered into with the worker.

13.2.4 The employment record card as a key for entry into working life

Assuming that entry into working life by way of hiring normally occurs through the "public offices of obligatory placement", the employment record card is the prerequisite for registration on job seekers' lists; except in some cases which are stipulated by law, it is an essential condition for legal hiring, insofar as employers are prohibited to take on workers who do not have a card. This prohibition involves fines for non-compliant em-

ployers but does not lead to invalidation of employment contracts. In the above-mentioned exceptionally stipulated cases, the employer is required to issue a "substitute certificate" at the end of the employment relationship if employment is terminated by the employer; this certificate must indicate the duration of employment and the tasks involved.

13.3 The regulation of skill levels

13.3.1 Legal aspects of qualification

A worker's obligation to work involves fulfilling the tasks and duties for which he has been hired into a company: the decisive factor leading to the determination of these tasks and duties is the skill level.

Skill levels constitute the main categories dividing the personnel of an enterprise in terms of the hierarchic structure of this enterprise. Article 2095 of the civil code and the subsequent amendments laid down in Law no. 190 of 13 May 1985 establish four such categories: managers (divided into administrative and technical managers), professional and managerial staff, white-collar workers (lower and higher level) and blue-collar workers (apprentices, unskilled workers, ordinary workers, qualified workers, specialized workers).

13.3.2 Contractual regulation of skill levels

The concept of skill levels would be too imprecise and over-simplified without reference to employment contracts: indeed, employment contracts define, within the basic categories laid down in the civil code, the range of skill levels in the various production sectors, taking into account the details of the production process and the evolution of the organization of labour in harmony with scientific and technological process.

Skill levels refer directly to the tasks which an individual carries out within an organization, to the degree of delegation power and responsibility conferred to an individual in relation to the duties necessary for the realization of his work.

In practice, skill levels indicate the generic object of the obligation to work and the tasks assigned indicate the specific object of this obligation, or the work carried out by an individual on the basis of directives given by an employer or a person delegated to give them.

13.3.3 Skill levels achieved on the job

Skill levels are the essential element of an employment relationship: indeed, they establish the specific position of the worker in relation to the duties for which he is suited or which are assigned to him. The law gives a worker the right to the skill level under which he was hired, and consequently the right to carry out the tasks for which he was hired and to benefit from a remuneration level, from social benefits and from legal benefits corresponding to these tasks. If he is assigned to equivalent tasks, he has the right to receive a remu-

neration at least as high as the amount he received as his last wage or salary. If, however, a worker is assigned tasks corresponding to a higher category, he has the right to receive a remuneration which corresponds to the higher category, and after a certain period which is stipulated either in national collective agreements or in company supplementary agreements, he has the right to be upgraded permanently to this higher category.

Movement from one category to the next can follow various patterns: formerly these patterns were more closely connected to seniority in one skill level or in one category; now, movement tends to be the result of the growing popularity of job rotation or due to the increased standardization of tasks and job enlargement, or as a consequence of job enrichment.

Another way of moving from one category to another is based on training courses and qualification examinations. This system is particularly well-developed in larger companies, and even more extensively in companies involving government participation: in such companies, shifts from the blue-collar to the white-collar category through training measures, without interruption of the work relationship, have become increasingly popular as one way of coping with increasing tertiarization.

13.3.4 Formal assessment of skill levels upon entry into and in the course of an employment relationship

On rare occasions in the course of an employment relationship, there may be structured forms of examination intended to certify a particular level of skills or specialization. Particularly in private employment, there are practically no other means available to certify skills or specialization than the constraints stipulated by contract. Normally, aside from external constraints, such as national or European laws, there are no formal examinations for the assessment of skill levels. Sectors such as naval, air and railway systems and the chemical industry are in general more strictly organized, insofar as work in these sectors is subject to inspections of certification, of validation, unification, standardization, and to destructive and non-destructive material tests, as both work and management must guarantee conditions of maximum safety.

13.3.5
In the above cases, as in the case of driving licences for personal or work use, those whose tasks will include welding and riveting aircraft parts, train parts, pressurized containers, etc. must hold a "temporary licence", a qualification or specialization certificate recognized by national certification organizations: the National Association for Conformity Control (ANCC), the naval register, the aeronautical register, etc.

13.3.6
In contrast to the private production system of goods and services, the public system, particularly at the upper echelons, proceeds by way of competitions and civil service examinations through which it is possible to verify that the certification of professional competence corresponds to criteria of equality, transparency and merit.

14. The structure and organization of the regional system of vocational training

The need to better manage a system which in a short time had become increasingly complex and turbulent established the necessity for the gradual decentralization of administrative functions to more homogeneous and more functional regional units better able to cope with and solve economic or structural difficulties.

Law no. 845 of 21 December 1978, the "**framework law regarding vocational training**", was the first to provide a complete regulation of the Italian vocational training system, defining the functions of the State, the Regions and local authorities as well as those of the social partners, companies and their associates, agencies whose main object is vocational training.

This law states that training is an instrument of education and civic improvement, that "it occurs within the framework of the objectives of economic planning and tends to benefit employment, production, and the evolution of the organization of labour in harmony with scientific and technological process" (Article 1).

Other elements of some political and social significance were also included in framework Law no. 845/78. Among these, that vocational training initiatives

- are aimed at all citizens who have completed compulsory schooling;
- can also be benefited from by foreigners in Italy for reasons of work or training, within the scope of international agreements or laws currently in force.

Participation in vocational training activities is non-compulsory, in contrast to the "public" education system, which was analyzed in the first section of this report.

14.1 The Ministry of Labour and Social Security

Law no. 845 of 21 December 1978, the "framework law regarding vocational training", defines the main areas of jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

Particularly relevant are the following functions, among others:

a) the establishment and financing of vocational training initiatives for Italian workers abroad; these activities are then supervised and managed by the Foreign Ministry;
b) the preparation and financing of personnel training activities for technical and co-operative assistance programmes with developing countries;

c) activities involving study, research, documentation, information and experimentation, which are defined in a special annual programme depending on the needs of national planning and the steering and coordination of a sector;
d) technical assistance and financing for vocational training activities held in agreement with the Regions and through them in cases of local imbalances between supply and demand on the labour market;
e) organization and financing, in agreement with the Regions and upon their initiative, of further training courses for vocational training personnel;
f) the determination of the technical requirements needed for the recognition of structures and facilities used in vocational training.

Monitoring activities and technical assistance from the Ministry of Regions is ensured by Isfol (Institute for the Development of Vocational Training). The Regions and Isfol present an annual report to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security on the current situation and plans involving vocational training activities.

14.1.2 The Central Employment Commission

It expresses opinions and formulates proposals related to the fulfilment of the functions of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

14.1.3 ISFOL (Institute for the Development of Vocational Training)

ISFOL is a public-law institution operating in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and with other administrative bodies of the State and Regions for the development of vocational training.

Its institutional objectives are the promotion of research and studies on innovations and on the vocational characteristics required in terms of supply and demand trends on the labour market; technical assistance in terms of the planning of training activities; didactic experimentation and the implementation of multi-media programmes; documentation of employment policies and methodologies of worker training and guidance.

14.2 The Regions and local authorities

Article 3 of Law no. 845/78 establishes the powers and functions of the Regions. In summary, these powers and functions are:

- organizing the vocational training system, developing public initiatives and respecting the multiplicity of training proposals;
- ensuring the participation of the social partners and management authorities in planning at the regional and local level;

- determining the modalities and criteria of consultation with the peripheral offices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Ministry of Public Education in matters of planning
- guaranteeing to all participants in vocational training activities the exercise of their democratic and trade union rights and participating in the promotion of experimental training initiatives;
- adapting regional and local laws to international and Community legislation;
- regulating delegation to local authorities of administrative functions in matters contained in this law.

In conclusion, it is always the responsibility of the Regions to draw up long-term and annual programmes for the implementation of vocational training activities, a duty exercised through harmonious dialogue between several groups having diverse and complementary functions.

14.2.1 Regional decentralization

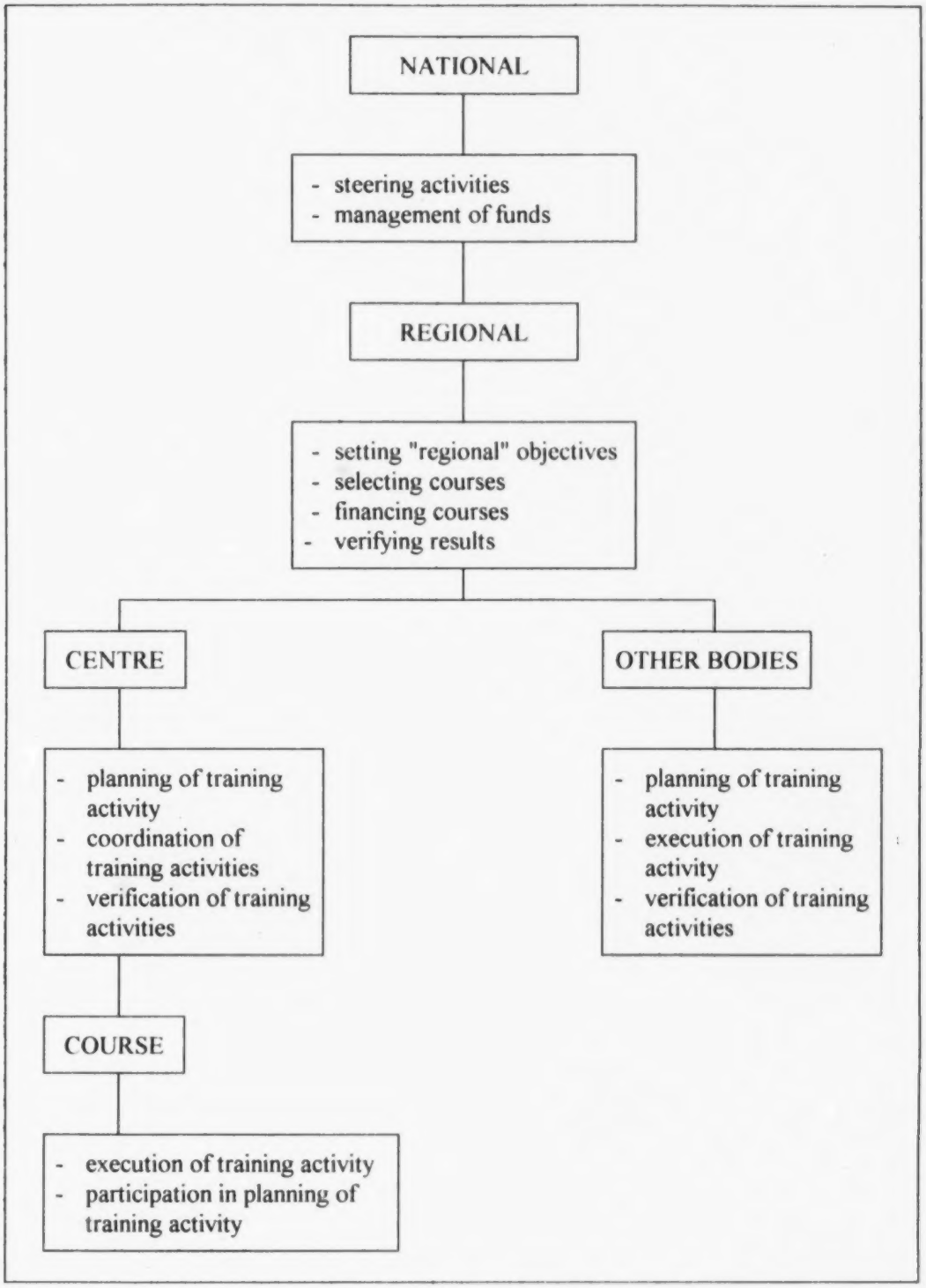
Regional decentralization tends to function in a manner which is parallel to the same function at State level.

The body representing regional sovereignty is the Regional Council, headed by a President, and the regional executive body is the "Giunta", the Regional Committee, also headed by a President. In Regions with special status the powers of the Council and the Giunta almost completely replace those of the State.

The regional policy regarding vocational training, in spite of the lack of homogeneity of the duties assigned to the "assessors" (the "ministers" of the Regions), is determined by the regional "Giunta" through the relevant assessor after consultation with the various social groups, representatives of employers and workers ("social management"). The "Giunta" prepares and seeks approval for a three-year vocational training plan, updated yearly, on regional priorities and on the directives of the central administration of labour and employment policy and matters relating to the European Community, after debating this plan in council.

The delegated assessor is in charge of the implementation of the plan of activities and financial management, reporting back to the Region, the State or the Community from time to time and according to the situation at hand.

Table 1 - Decision-making levels in the system of vocational training



15. The management of the regional system of vocational training

The powers and functions of the Regions consist of drawing up long-term and annual programmes for the implementation of vocational training activities, a duty exercised through harmonious dialogue between several groups having diverse and complementary functions.

In summary, the Regions are called upon to provide and regulate with their own laws:

a) the planning, implementation and financing of vocational training activities;

b) modalities for achieving training objectives regarding skill levels, in keeping with the principles of collective agreements and legislation regarding placement;

c) vocational training activities for sectors with special training needs arising from seasonal factors affecting the productive cycle or from the familiar, associative or cooperative nature of company management;

d) vocational qualification of the disabled and the handicapped as well as the necessary activities to guarantee their right to vocational training;

e) vocational training activities in penal and remand institutions;

f) the reorganization and restructuration of public institutions operating on a regional level as well as their dissolution or re-incorporation if necessary;

g) training and further training for vocational training personnel employed in the Region, taking into account the existence of various training proposals providing they are included in regional planning, through direct initiatives or agreements with universities or other scientific and public or private research institutions and training authorities having the characteristics listed under point 15.1.1.

15.1 Pluralistic social management of vocational training

In Italy, the vocational training system is characterized by "pluralism of management": each Region adopts its own solutions for the management of vocational training. These solutions can be of two basic types:

a) a public typology, expressed through
   - direct management by the Region or by a regional institution
   - delegated management to local authorities (province, municipality and their associates

or mountain communities)
- mixed management, which includes both direct and delegated management.

b) a typology established by contract:
the Regions, for the implementation of training activities planned within the scope of the three-year plan and the annual programme, may enter into contracts with structures related to democratic organizations of dependent or autonomous workers, employers' organizations, associations having educational and social aims, companies and their associates, or the cooperative movement.

15.1.1 Access to the contractual system

Access to the contractual system for the authorities listed above involves the following prerequisites:

1. having vocational training as an objective
2. having suitable structures, organizational capacities and equipment
3. being of a non-profit nature
4. guaranteeing social control of the activities through committees established ad hoc by the Regions for this purpose
5. using the category-based national employment contract for the personnel
6. publishing an annual financial report for each centre of activity
7. accepting regional control of the correct utilization of funds received, which can be implemented in the form of inspections

As regards the relationship between public management and contractual management, there are divergent orders and positions, insofar as:

- some Regions give the managing authorities a subsidiary role as a result of shortages in the public management system or as a temporary substitute for public management, leaving the decision on this issue in the hands of the regional authorities;
- other Regions assert the parity of public and private activities, always with a high margin of discretion reserved for the Region in selecting one or the other.

Monitoring activities and technical assistance from the Ministry of Regions is ensured by Isfol (Institute for the Development of Vocational Training). The Regions and Isfol present an annual report to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security on the current situation and plans involving vocational training activities.

New activities must be based on a number of principles, e.g.:

1) reducing the current divisions in the vocational training system, in other words making a differentiation between long-term activities involving general training and basic vocational skills, which are for the most part implemented by the school system, from short or medium-term activities in qualification or further training organized by the Regions;

2) integrating planning for regional activities with company planning;

3) upgrading the hinge function of the local authorities and social groups.

The possibilities for innovation opened up by recent legislation should encourage the development of the relationship between the Regions and the Ministry of Public Education (both the central and peripheral offices) to determine the instruments and modalities through which a closer integration between the school system and the regional vocational training system can be achieved.

15.2 Training activities: the planning process

The planning component is, therefore, one of the main aspects of the "circle of preliminary examination" - analyzing needs, planning training activities, preparing course activities and verifying the activities which have been proposed.

Training activities must have a cyclical and modular structure; they must operate according to suitable systems of alternance between training experience and work experience. Moreover, the programmes are based on a principle of polyvalence at the basis and specialization at the top.

15.2.1 Teaching personnel in vocational training

The framework law stipulates that **teaching personnel** must be employed on a regional basis and that remuneration must be calculated on the basis of a national trade union agreement between the Regions, the Government and the trade union organizations with the highest involvement.

Teachers of vocational training are guaranteed:
- freedom of teaching
- the development of their professional status through further training courses in technical, didactic and cultural subjects

Vocational training personnel employed by authorities involved in contractual management must be ensured a remuneration on the same level as that of personnel employed by the Region.

Teachers employed by various authorities, by associations, or by single-company or company group stock corporations have contracts and remuneration levels varying according to the corresponding national employment contract.

An analysis of the characteristics and occupational backgrounds of personnel in regional vocational training shows that most of them (3/5) have worked prior to becoming vocational training teachers. This type of experience is also directly correlated to the degrees and qualifications they have: in general, not higher than a diploma from a State vocational

institution or a technical institution, or a school-leaving certificate with specialization in the commercial, scientific, technical or vocational area.

There is no special diploma for vocational training experts in Italy at present.

Older teachers (those with the lowest education levels) come from small companies and craft trade enterprises; the younger ones (with a higher level of education) come to vocational training after having gathered experience in other teaching environments.

In addition to being relatively young on the average, then, vocational training teachers tend not to have a particularly high education level and prior experience in working situations which, for the most part, are connected to trade or school situations.

This is intertwined with an organizational system of vocational training based primarily on school-type courses.

Nowadays, this type of structure is being reconsidered, because for many participants it is a path which is too similar to the school situation, critically described as "series B".

More and more, organizers are recognizing the need to differentiate between the two models (the school system and the training system), but to also integrate various operative necessities and organize both systems so as to offer young people an optimum vocational level.

Furthermore, in the current vocational training system, emphasis is often placed more on teaching than on practical learning.

With the emergence of new technologies, it has been shown that a new type of knowledge has been developing, a knowledge which does not replace existing knowledge, but rather integrates it, transforms it, expresses it in new instruments and new combinations.

To this purpose, new training strategies are being evolved. The vision of vocational training as being primarily course-based is being left behind; the didactic focus is shifting from teaching to various individualized specialization paths. As a result, classroom teaching and traditional courses are becoming merely one of several possibilities, one of several training paths.

Vocational training, then, is being structured according to new criteria: shorter, more to the point, quicker, continuous, characterized by opportunities of mobility on a regional, national and international level. A training activity in close connection with the corporate world through traineeships, visits, meetings, ready to accept new directions, such as "open learning" - i.e. training processes which are not structured as traditional courses, but organized with the help of various supports (printed, audio, video, computer, etc.) and specially programmed for individual use.

In this environment, teachers will be increasingly called upon to take on planning and coordinating duties in addition to strictly teaching tasks, which will gradually be entrusted to various experts in individual sectors.

Thanks to improved methods of survey and research, teachers will be put in a position to predict changes, anticipate new expectations and better understand the differences between their "clients".

Teacher training therefore presents a challenge which, if successful, will promote the growth of a culture of training and along with it improve the quality level of the teachers.

This segment of education is currently the responsibility of the State (Ministry of Labour) through funds provided pursuant to Articles 18 and 26 of Law no. 845/78 and Law no. 492/88.

15.2.2 Quantitative aspects of regional vocational training

15.2.2.1 Courses and pupils in the regional system

There were approx. 19,000 courses planned by the Regions on the basis of approved training plans in 1990 and 1991, and 340,000 pupils, with an average number of pupils per course of about 18.

The data collected lead to the following conclusions:

- in 1991, there was a slight increase in regional training activities: the number of courses planned was almost 19,000 compared to just over 18,500 in 1990 (an increase of 2 %);
- pupil numbers developed somewhat less dynamically: nearly 340,000 in 1991, an increase of just over a thousand as compared to 1990;
- consequently, the average number of pupils per course dropped from 18.3 to 17.8 between 1990 and 1991.

15.2.2.2 Teachers in the regional vocational training system

A 1990 Isfol investigation showed that a total of 27,989 staff members were involved in the regional vocational training system, divided in a ratio of 1 to 2 between public or regional and/or delegated management (9,694) and contractual management (18,295).

The public sector has a different ratio between teaching personnel, 60 %, and non-teaching personnel (40 %), than the contracted sector, for which the corresponding figures are 75 % and 25 % respectively.

15.2.2.3 Regional expenditure for vocational training

In terms of funds spent by the Regions on vocational training, total expenditure in 1990

exceeded 2,500 billion lire, an increase of 19 % vis-à-vis 1989; the strongest increases tended to be in the central and north-eastern areas, while in the north-west fluctuations were negligible (indeed, expenses were reduced in some areas).

The South, on the other hand, showed an increase of approximately 9 % between 1989 and 1990, and a total expenditure figure of more than 1,230 billion lire, about half of the total national expenditure.

15.2.3 Typology of training activities

A **cycle** is a modular training period centred on a group of users determined according to the chosen vocational stream and the level of technical and practical knowledge at the outset; its aim is the achievement of a predetermined training objective.

No more than four consecutive cycles are permissible without suitable working experiences inserted between them, exception being made for pupils with physical, mental or sensory handicaps.

Courses make up systematic sets of practical and technical activities which can include phases of in-company practical training.

These consist of one or more cycles, never more than four, each of them lasting no more than 600 hours.

Course objectives are:

a) the qualification and specialization of persons who have completed compulsory schooling and have no working experience;

b) the acquisition of special vocational skills for persons with an upper secondary school leaving diploma;

c) the qualification of persons whose cultural level is higher than that corresponding to obligatory schooling;

d) the qualification of workers involved in retraining processes;

e) the qualification or specialization of workers who have working experience;

f) the further training and further qualification of workers;

g) the vocational re-education of workers who have suffered a disablement resulting from accident or illness;

h) the training of persons with physical or sensory handicaps which prevent them to attend regular courses.

Table 2 - Course typologies in the classification systems of the Regions

TYPOLOGY

A. TRAINING FOR THE JOB

A1. *First-level training*

- Prerequisites:
  - completed obligatory schooling
  - for young people between 16-18 years of age
  - for young people older than 18 years of age
- Specialization/post-qualification
- Training for young people with admission to 3rd year upper secondary school or qualification diploma

A2. *Training integrated with state schooling*

- training for vocational pupils returning to the school system
- training for pupils from the final years of upper sec. education

A3. *Second-level training*

- qualification for persons with diplomas
- qualification for persons with degrees
- specialization/further training for persons with diplomas
- specialization for persons with degrees
- qualification for persons whose prior qualification is related to the target qualification
- qualification for persons whose prior qualification is not related to the target qualification

B. ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

B1. *Training in connection with mixed contracts*

- apprenticeships
- work/training contracts

B2. *Training for unemployed and employed persons*

- qualification
- requalification/conversion
- further training
- specialization

B3. *Training to achieve particular trade certificates and authorizations to exercise vocational activities*

C.- TRAINING FOR SPECIAL CATEGORIES

- restricted
- handicapped
- women

15.3 The qualification examination

Not all the courses mentioned in the preceding section involve formal certification of the result achieved. In general, all persons who have attended vocational training courses directly or through the auspices of the Regions or delegated local authorities (provinces, mountain communities, intermunicipal associations, municipalities, etc.) have the right, at the end of the course, to a certificate of attendance specifying the nature and the technical and practical contents of the course, its duration, and in cases where a level of professional competence has been achieved or a mark or final assessment has been given, a range of the general and generic validity expressed by the words "for the uses permissible by law".

Nevertheless, by decision of the regional authorities, some vocational training courses are run with the objective of achieving vocational qualification; these courses are concluded by final examinations assessing the achieved level of suitability according to the procedure of due and proper State examinations.

It is evident that qualifications obtained through this modality deserve special legal and social recognition.

15.3.1 The examination commissions assessing suitability for qualification

The final examinations for qualification certificates are conducted before examination commissions composed according to the stipulations of regional law. They include:

a) experts selected by the peripheral bodies of the Ministry of Public Education and of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security;
b) experts selected by the trade union organizations and the employers' associations.

15.3.2 The procedure of qualification examinations

First of all it should be said that regional qualification examinations are the closing act of a cyclical and modular training itinerary approved by the relevant regional bodies of the vocational training council in terms of objectives, duration, division of cycles and modules, adoption of alternance systems between training and working and in terms of the final practical and theoretical vocational standards.

Some Regions have set up due and proper certification committees for qualification examinations, with the task of verifying and approving the practical tests selected for the suitability examination, or of requesting adjustments in terms of the vocational standards either of employment contracts or of the local labour market, so that there is a homologation of the training targets between the industrial basin and the regional manpower. Moreover, the committees also approve the test and evaluation inventory, taking into account the key points and their appropriate weight and occurrence for a correct vocational evaluation.

In this regard and in view of Community contexts, there has lately been growing enthusiasm for experiments favouring a less "empirical" and more "scientific" evaluation of qualification examinations.

The suitability examination consists of a practical examination and an interview on the scientific, technical and graphic aspects of training.

a) The practical examination

The practical test consists of a "masterpiece" or the production of a "complex", or the complete assembly of an item of plant or equipment, or the furnishing of a complete service; it should represent a synthesis of the technical, organizational and relational level of complexity typical of a fully autonomous job carried out with full mastery of the individual phases of the production cycle of a product or service, in logical relation with collective agreements and even more so with the scientific and technological process representing the system of needs of the region's firms producing goods or providing services.
It is particularly important for the commission to analyze:

a) the *production report*, which describes the entire work cycle, with its phases, its subphases, the description of the equipment and measuring instruments, the technical details, the accident prevention measures, etc.;

b) the *test and evaluation inventory*. In general, this form is structured according to the ideal cycle of phases and key points with the weighted mark, the presentation of the finished product, the assessment of allowance or reduction .../100, the final mark .../100.

b) The theoretical examination

The theoretical examination includes questions on the following subjects: general and vocational culture, arithmetic, geometry, physics; technical drawing and interpretation of office technical drawings; vocational technology, notions of hygiene and industrial prophylactics, ergonomics and accident prevention.

In general, a pupil is judged suitable if he obtains a score of at least 60/100 for both the practical and the theoretical examinations. In borderline cases, the pupil's performance during the two or three years of the course is reviewed, particularly that of the final year.

The judgement of the commission is "suitable" or "unsuitable"; it is unappealable.

15.3.3 The validity of the qualifications achieved within the regional system

The Regions issue a certificate to pupils who have been judged suitable, on the basis of which they will be given the appropriate skill level for entering working life and for integration in a company by the placement office.

The certificate also constitutes qualification to enter public competitions.

15.4 Certification of qualification to improve the vocational chances of disadvantaged social groups on the labour market: apprentices, young people and women

The formalized - and therefore valid for the entire country - assessment procedures for the certification of vocational qualification are the result of efforts by the Regions as well as of laws promulgated by the State for the promotion of maximum employment for young people and women. The management of the extraordinary funds, the approach to exceptions to the laws on placement, the organization and management of activities are all, however, entrusted to the Regions or autonomous provinces. Two examples of this are the law on apprenticeships and the law on work/training contracts.

15.4.1 Apprenticeships

An important step towards the evolution of a training form directed to the certification of professional competence and therefore to the standardization of a national system of skill levels was, prior to the transfer of jurisdiction for vocational training from the State to the Regions, **Law no. 25 of 19 January 1955** on apprenticeship.

15.4.1.1 The obligations of the employer

This law established apprenticeship as a special employment relationship requiring the employer to provide or cause to be provided in his company the instruction necessary for his apprentices to acquire the technical capability to become skilled workers through work in the company. A contract of this type applies only to persons under the age of 20.

15.4.1.2 The obligations of the apprentice

Among the obligations of the apprentice, the law stipulates the obligation to work with diligence and regular attendance of the complementary teaching courses, fixed at eight hours per week. The employer is required to give the apprentice the leave necessary to attend the courses and any required examinations.

15.4.1.3 Assessment of an apprentice's professional competence

The complementary teaching (150 hours of lessons for each phase, each usually lasting one year) can run without interruption or with a break.

At the end of the courses, Article 18 of the law stipulates that pupils must take an examination establishing their suitability for the exercise of the trade which was the object of the apprenticeship. Two important instruments for the steering and management of the system were the "Dictionary of professions" and above all the famous "monographs" including the "Programmes of the complementary courses for apprentices", published by the technical office of the General Directorate of occupation and vocational training. The published programmes, standardized according to general norms established by the Ministry of

Labour and Social Security in agreement with the Ministry of Public Education, cover the main vocational qualifications in the leading sectors of the time: the mechanical sector, the electro-mechanical sector and the electronics sector.

The value of the "monographs" rests on the fact that in establishing the duration, curricula and technical, scientific and vocational contents of training, in fixing details of the practical work to be done in companies or offices without excessive loss of time or need for special training, and the subject matter of the qualification examinations together with the relevant criteria for their evaluation, they were a step towards a nationally unified system of the existing situation, and therefore, of vocational certification.

15.4.1.4 The suitability examination for apprentices

The suitability examination for apprentices consisted of a practical examination and a theoretical examination.

a) The practical examination

The first stipulation established by the monographs was that the practical examination should consist of a "masterpiece", which could be selected from suggested topics or be a similar type of work, i.e. exhibiting a similar level of complexity.

Then came a great deal of detailed information on evaluation modalities for the master-pieces. For the practical examinations, in general, the first element was the verification of dimensions, indicating the key evaluation points in one column, in another column the total possible score for each key point, and in the third column points subtracted for every fault, in the fourth column the ponderal multiplication coefficient. The total was obtained by adding the results of the evaluation of each key point. The mark was in twentieths, so that a masterpiece which was perfect in all points would have a total score of 20/20.

The second element of evaluation was the time spent. If the effective time needed equalled the time allowed, the score given was 13/20. If the time needed was more or less than the time allowed, the score was increased or reduced by one point for each 15 minutes of deviation (or 1/3 of a point for every five minutes). Another recommended method was referring to the average time needed by all pupils.

The third evaluation factor was the technical characteristics of the work: the maximum score was 20/20 in this case as well.

Now the scores were combined: the final score had to be in twentieths as well, so that the three marks (dimensions, time and characteristics) were added and divided by three.

b) The theoretical examination

The theoretical examination had to include questions on: arithmetic, geometry, physics; technical drawing and interpretation of office technical drawings; vocational technology.

A pupil was judged suitable if he obtained a score of at least 12/20 for both the practical examination and the theoretical examination, with the additional proviso that in each of the three marks given for the practical examination (dimensions, time and characteristics) the minimum permissible score would be 11/20.

15.4.2 The new centralism in regional apprenticeship programmes

The apprenticeship system, which provided an excellent foundation for transparency on the labour market and for guarantees to companies and to workers' representatives, gradually became obsolete as a result of the "jump" made by technology and industrial relations in the '70s and '80s.

After decades of progressive loss of value of this "institution" on a national level, important contributions were made in the '80s by the more industrially and socially advanced Regions such as Veneto, Lombardy, Emilia Romagna, Umbria and, more recently, by the autonomous provinces of Trento, Bolzano and Valle d'Aosta.

A first example of this type of progress can be found in the Province of Trento and its Labour Agency, which has created the foundation for a successful model now being extended to other Regions. The Agency operates hand in hand with the trade associations, recognizing the training role of the company as and the company's contribution to the training effort equal to 120 hours per year per apprentice and providing the opportunity for extra theoretical training in regional vocational training centres in the form of four "weekly blocks" (40 hours) amounting to a total of 160 hours training annually.

The latest important elements towards the development of a national model were contributed in 1981 and 1983 by the Province of Bolzano, where a law stipulated compulsory attendance at complementary teaching courses for apprentices operated by the Province. The company owner "is obligated to register an apprentice at the relevant vocational school within 10 days of hiring, to ensure regular and assiduous attendance and to advise the school office if the apprentice is absent for illness or other reasons".

The second interesting aspect of this provincial legislation was the specification of vocational profiles to be achieved through apprenticeships: "professions subject to apprenticeships are vocational activities the learning of which requires prolonged in-company training supplemented by theoretical instruction". The length of apprenticeships was determined on the basis of the degree of difficulty of the vocational training, the varying notional level required by individual professions as well as the various behavioural patterns required for the exercise of these professions".

The third important factor for the recognition of certification of skill levels is that the employer must instruct the apprentice "in person or through employees holding a master craftsman's or a journeyman's diploma".

The fourth aspect is that the law (1987) stipulates that at the end of an apprenticeship, apprentices must take a "journeyman's examination", the object of which is "to assess whether the apprentice has achieved, in conformity with the training framework, the capacities and the knowledge required for the profession which was the object of the apprenticeship and whether he is able to exercise the pertinent occupation autonomously".

The final apprenticeship examination, now carried out along the lines of the regional examination of skill level suitability, gives young people a certificate of skill level in accordance with the contract entered into with the company and equivalent to the certificate issued by the Vocational Training Centres to full-time pupils.

15.4.3 The work/training contract

Also worthy of mention among the extraordinary measures taken by the State to re-establish a balance between supply and demand on the national labour market is **Law no. 285 of 1 June 1977**, later amended and supplemented by **Law no. 479/78**, once again intended to promote employment among young people.

Law no. 285/77 marked the introduction of "**work/training contracts**".

The significance of this law, which was flanked by measures promoting the hiring of young people registered on a special job seekers' list, was based on the fact that it explicitly made the Regions responsible for promoting and authorizing training cycles in companies.

The continuing crisis in the youth employment sector following the **tripartite agreement of 22 January 1983** (Government-trade unions-employers) led to the passing of **law 79/83**, which gave employers the temporary power (for one year) to hire by name young people between 15 and 29 years of age with limited contracts for training purposes.

Within the framework of legislation promoting youth employment, yet another law to be mentioned is **Law no. 863/84** on the regulation of work/training contracts. This special contractual form is regulated by Article 3 of the law.

This law allows public commercial bodies, companies and their associates - on the condition that at the time of hiring there are no work suspensions in force and that there have been no mass dismissals in the twelve preceding months - to hire:
- young people between 15 and 29 years of age, up to 32 for women;
- directly by "recruitment by name";
- on the basis of fixed-term contracts (with a maximum duration of 24 months).

At the end of the contract, the company has the option of deciding on the continuation or interruption of the employment relationship with the young person. Training projects are not necessary unless the employer intends to request financial assistance from the Region.

On the basis of the above characteristics, it is extremely difficult to quantify the significance of such financial assistance, as they do not lend themselves to statistic survey, either due to the vastness of the field of analysis, or as a result of the difficulty involved in gaining access to the financial figures of private companies.

However, it is certain that funds spent on vocational training in companies, and in particular in large companies, come increasingly from these sources, as a result of the increased use being made by private bodies of Community or public funding, thus following two aims simultaneously:

- the qualification of a company's own staff for the realization of internal aims of various natures (corporate reorganization, reconversion, etc.)
- the substitution of a company's own costs by external funds

15.4.4 Quantitative aspects: apprenticeships and work/training contracts

Within the productive system, training activities for the particular benefit of young people are represented by apprenticeships (for "users" between 14 and 19 years of age), which predominate in small and medium-sized enterprises, and in work/training contracts (up to 29 years, and 32 for women).

In view of the configuration of the Italian economic system and in view of the survey of SMEs and very small enterprises, it is important to give careful attention to the potential value of the more than 1,050,000 entrepreneurs who have direct relations with young people within the work/training system.

15.4.4.1 Young people integrated into companies

If the data on young people integrated into the productive system by means of apprenticeships or work/training contracts is examined, it becomes clear that these systems are particularly important. In 1989, 529,297 young people were hired on work/training contracts and 566,850 were taken on as apprentices. If we consider that apprentices represent 76.2 % of employment figures for young people between 14 and 19 years of age, and that 66.4 % of those hired on the basis of work/training contracts have completed compulsory schooling at best, it is reasonable to surmise that most of the young people between 14 and 19 years of age who are employed are being integrated into working life by way of one of these two contractual forms.

15.5 The evaluation of efficacy and efficiency in the regional training system

For the last three years both the Ministry of Labour and the Regions have financed studies and applied research projects with the objective of developing a scientific method of evaluation and promoting its use in the Regions and among the delegated or contracted bodies involved in vocational training.

Without going into details, we can state that four parameters can be used in evaluating the productivity of the systems and sub-systems under consideration: the level of service, the efficiency of implementation, the economic and financial efficiency and the efficacy.

The first parameter is level of service, meaning the relationship between the moment in which demand is expressed and the moment in which this demand is satisfied.

The second parameter for the evaluation of a supplier of non-profit services is the efficiency of implementation, i.e. the assessment of the relationship between estimates and effected action, either in terms of results (expected and achieved) or in terms of resources (estimated and actually used). In this case we can, for instance, distinguish between absolute and relative training efficiency, and between absolute didactic organization and relative didactic organization.

Absolute training efficiency is expressed in the ratio between persons trained and persons registered, whereas relative training efficiency is the ratio between pupils registered and pupils planned, or in more precise terms between the hours spent on the training of registered pupils and the hours planned for planned pupils.

Similarly, absolute didactic organizational efficiency, like any other ex ante evaluation, can be seen as a series of differences between indicators calculated with respect to the persons trained in individual courses (structures, human resources, equipment, contents, methodology, instruction) and basic values (standards) per course typology.

Relative didactic organizational efficiency, on the other hand, is the result of percentage fluctuation between the indicator calculated ex ante with respect to the expected users and the figure obtained at the end of the course.

The third parameter is efficiency in the narrower sense of the word, intended as a measure of the ratio between resources and results: the most representative synthetic indicator is the cost per pupil and per hour. Efficiency in the narrow sense calls for absolute economic and financial efficiency.

From absolute financial efficiency, the next step is relative financial efficiency, the most representative indicator in this case being the percentage fluctuation between the expected cost per pupil and per hour and the actual cost per hour and per pupil actually trained.

This evaluative scheme would be incomplete without the fourth parameter: efficacy, the production of results external to the system, i.e. effects on the use of the training activity.

In this case as well we can mention the criterion of absolute efficacy, an assessment by the user of the adequacy of the training received with respect to motives and expectations.

This adequacy is expressed, for instance, in the ratio between the number of persons trained who were satisfied with the training received and the total number of persons trained.

This application of quantitative rather than qualitative criteria is attributable to assessment methodologies of training activities.

The assessment of corporate result, including within the conventional senses already mentioned, also means giving a value, attributing a number to the capacity of the resources to produce changes in the sub-systems controlled by these resources and thus changes in the overall result of the company.

Efficiency and efficacy are an empirical system of relations implying connections between various forms of reality in relation to their contribution to the realization of an objective.

The issue of resources (persons, materials, equipment, machines, funds and information) is thus inescapable for a decision-maker wanting to make correct assessments. He will have to know what resources he can depend on, where they are, what their characteristics are and their capacity for producing results, their modalities of use and thus their cost factors, how to connect the result of each resource (ri) to the comprehensive result (R).

We know that even the most highly refined systems of corporate accounting offer only partial answers to these questions. Statements of assets and liabilities provide an indication on the availability and allocation of resources; accounts (trading accounts and partial accounts) give an indication of costs and the relation between resources and results. However, there is still much to be done, above all in the area of improvement of measures regarding human resources.

16. The corporate system of vocational training

The 1988 and 1989 Isfol reports noted the close correlation between company size, sector of activity, rate of product innovation and existence of training functions in Italian companies. A "training service" (which has over a hundred different concrete manifestations) is certainly present in large companies, perhaps present in medium-sized companies (the more innovative ones, or those belonging to Italian groups or to multinationals), and usually absent in small companies.

Although there seems to be a general tendency towards increased relative significance of limited companies within the total number of enterprises operating in the Italian system (information provided by Cerved on the basis of a Chamber of Commerce data base) or towards the growth of companies that are "more corporate than others" and usually larger, Italy continues to be a country with less than one million employees in manufacturing companies having more than 500 employees.

This means that on the whole, only a limited number of large companies (for both production and services together less than 2000) offer training services with training strategies more or less integrated in overall corporate strategies.

According to the 1989 Isfol report, surveys on the quantitative and qualitative demand for training in companies show a direct correlation between company size and internalization or externalization of training services and how this polarity is then in fact related to whether the company is active in the area of production or services.

The quantitative figures regarding training activity given by private centres in 1989 and directly from the companies are of interest: according to an estimate by CENSIS, this activity affected some 1,640,000 persons.

In order to underscore the creation of new training activities between school and work for young people, we should also mention a few "agreements with the productive system" set up by the Ministry of Public Education.

These agreements with organizations representing the productive system tend to institutionalize relations, but also to create a framework of guarantees which allows school institutions and companies to move with more flexibility.

On the other hand, with the raising of compulsory schooling age, the reduced space reserved for special-objective instruction in school curricula would in the long run tend to impoverish the vocational dimension in the absence of a direct relation with the world of production utilized as a fundamental resource for education and training.

17. Managerial and entrepreneurial training

It is suitable at this point to mention the significance of the role of the manager or entrepreneur in the light of data regarding the growth of one-person and very small companies.

Indeed, on the economic scene of the last decade, changes in forms of corporate management have become extremely rapid.

The growing trend towards economic internationalization, the high degree of technological innovation, increasingly differentiated and sophisticated consumer needs, and, last but not least, the Single European Market looming on the horizon, all of these factors have made the "corporate universe" even more competitive.

Competition will continue to shift from goods, services and capital to know-how, in one word to "brains". Only high-potential and highly educated personnel, above all those involved in strategic, developing economic segments, will influence, more than legislation or technocratic intervention, the system of reproduction and distribution of wealth.

Recent surveys have shown that there is no linear correlation between a country's investment in research and development and the growth in its gross domestic product.

This means that other immaterial, qualitative and suggestive factors, often not reducible to measurable parameters, affect the dynamics of the production of wealth and value added.

This implies that beyond the concrete profitability of a university system, there is a more hidden dimension, the focused production of professional human resources, normally the realm of the system constituted by studies and training consultancies, and by the business schools, which often operate in collaboration with universities or with training consultant societies, or which are structured as free enterprises in association with national and foreign academic and corporate circles.

Business schools tend to develop like universities, creating an internal teaching staff, investing in research and public activities (study conferences, seminars, publications).

In Italy, although there are more than 200 post-university and similar courses on the market with the label "master", the average number of graduates is 500 per year (compared with 70,000 in the United States), a situation which, on the short term, is not likely to cause problems of over-production.

The greatest contribution of these schemes can be summarized in their possibility of developing a capacity of interaction with various company functions, in changes of mentality in the way problems are approached.

18. Tendencies and prospects

18.1 The scope of training activities

The future tasks facing the various segments of the vocational training system involve three contexts:

- new professions;
- standardization of skill levels within the Community;
- further training activities

18.2 New professions

This direction is becoming necessary in view of the great number of new professions centred on broad types of productive processes and science-based methods of problem solving and problem setting.

The work content of these new professions is mainly related to control and maintenance activities, the coordination of various types of activities; work roles are identified primarily on the basis of the control process and not based on other more traditional elements (analytical duties, lists of tasks, qualification of industrial sectors, etc.).

Process professions (operators of automated processes - plant operators) involve the restructuring of supervisory control activities with operative control and maintenance coordination activities.

These professions can be defined in terms of subject areas (computer science, formal languages, understanding of processes), application technologies (variation control, algorithmic abilities) and approaches (diagnostic and problem solving).

For activities centred on innovation and engineering processes and on the maintenance of technical and organizational systems (plant, software, procedures, know-how, etc.), the number of specializations is increasing and the profiles and competences of skilled employees for the maintenance of technical and organizational systems are becoming increasingly differentiated. What distinguishes these productive services professions (for instance, maintenance specialist) involves the subject areas (greater theoretical knowledge) application technologies (statistic/organizational methodology in addition to diagnosis and technical intervention), approaches (systemic and non-systemic, emergency).
For professions centred on coordination, the intermediate management function (systems manager) involves managing a second level of production process control.

Relevant duties involve processes such as production planning, control of production progress, optimization of technical and human resources, economic management control,

control of global process parameters (quantity, quality, costs), control and maintenance of technological and organizational structures.

Many of these processes are becoming computer-based, centred on models involving increased formalization; they therefore require knowledge and use of automated information systems, and often the need to plan and implement modifications to these systems.

In particular, these professional roles maintain the interface between the "micro-system" associated with them and the general system (boundary control).

18.3 European integration: standardization of qualification systems

Recent legislation harmonizing high-level professional qualifications is a first major confirmation of how a stronger effort towards renewal will arise, in the '90s, from the European integration processes.

Similarly, Community programmes will have ever increasing importance in our training system; they will become more consistent and will find more application in schools, universities and training centres.

18.4 Further training

In the foreseeable future, demand from individuals, in addition to demand from companies, will constitute a further factor for the diversification of vocational training, with activities seemingly hovering on the borderline between work and "non work", which in fact for many people will be the only opportunity to make up elements of missed "basic knowledge" which, in turn, are the prerequisites for getting a job or improving it.

This growing demand from small enterprises, training activities tied to their corporate capacity, the spread of new technologies in non-industrial sectors, the possibility of training people having more skills in various sectors, training needs triggered by medium-term changes, etc., all these situations involve changes either in the content of instruction, or in the form in which these contents are transmitted: both contents and methods are then far different from the type of vocational training traditionally related to dependent work in a large industrial enterprise.

18.5 Training in the year 2000: training for change

Industrial culture has changed tremendously in the course of the past few years; the point now is not only to respect the rules of the game but also to constantly innovate them.

Faced with a society undergoing change, what we have to do is work by meta-competence: in other words, competence which guarantees, rather than the suitable response from the sector, the methodology for change. From time to time this will be a methodology of orientation in terms of the use of resources, a methodology of learning to make it possible to learn what succeeds one way or the other, a planning methodology which will guarantee the capacity of innovation with regard to the processes being used.

In this situation, the training process no longer consists of teaching someone norms that have to be internalized, but teaching someone the capacity to understand variables, to control them, to innovate them, to combine them, to manage them.

Methodologies for learning are becoming more important than the acquisition of specific contents: learning to learn more than just "knowledge", in order to combine "knowledge" with "knowing how". From this point of view, training is basically becoming a process oriented towards culture and change: change is no longer a perturbation to be controlled, but a resource to be used to reinforce the efficacy of action through suitable structural changes.

Appendix 1: Abbreviations

EEC	European Economic Community
CENSIS	Centro Studi Investimenti Sociali [Centre for Studies on Social Investment]
CIPE	Commissione Interministeriale per la Programmazione Economica [Inter-ministerial commission for economic planning]
CUN	Consiglio Universitario Nazionale [National University Council]
CNR	Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche [National Research Council]
CNST	Consiglio Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnologia [National Council of Science and Technology]
ESF	European Social Fund
ISFOL	Istituto per lo Sviluppo della formazione professionale dei lavoratori [Institute for the Development of Vocational Training]

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Appendix 3: Glossary

Preliminary note

This glossary is not intended to be a rigid instrument of terminology for professionals users.

It is intended for the use of the "citizen of Europe", to help him understand texts which, although their primary scope is to provide a "service", cannot avoid specialized legal terminology, the legal and institutional practice of the country and some popular scientific vocabulary.

In this context, we must refer to work done by CEDEFOP on a "thesaurus" of the terminology of vocational training.

"APPRENDISTATO" [APPRENTICESHIP]

"Apprenticeships are special employment relationships requiring the employer to provide or cause to be provided in his company the instruction necessary for his apprentices to obtain the technical capacity to become skilled workers through work in the company."
"The vocational training of an apprentice takes place through practical training and complementary instruction."

The law (no. 25, 19 January 1955) says "special employment relationship" to underscore the obligation on the employer's part to provide instruction, to become the "master", and the obligation/right of the apprentice to learn in order to acquire the trade and become qualified.

The Regions are responsible for the entire system of training apprentices, but not for "the regulation of the employment relationship", which falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour.

Furthermore, apprentices represent almost 80 % of dependent workers between the ages of 14 and 19, i.e. they make up almost all the young people who enter the labour market immediately after completing compulsory schooling. This is especially true if it is taken into account that young workers in this age group also include those receiving their qualification from Vocational Training Centres and Vocational Institutes.

Nowadays, apprenticeships are particularly prevalent in craft trades.

"CONTRATTO DI FORMAZIONE-LAVORO" [WORK/TRAINING CONTRACT]

Article 8 of Law no. 285 of 1 June 1977 states: the training contract must be laid down in writing and must cover:

1. the duration;

2. the working hours, which cannot be less than twenty hours per week and must enable the young person to attend suitable cycles of supplementary vocational training promoted or authorized by the Region; the total number of hours, including for the hours spent in the above-mentioned vocational training cycles, cannot exceed the number of hours determined by the contract;

3. the modalities regulating the training activity, through vocational courses intended to allow the young person to acquire suitable training by the end of the contractual relationship;

4. the legal status and remuneration.

In the course of the contract, the employment record card is kept by the employer, who must enter the beginning and end of the employment relationship, the training activity and the professional competence level achieved.

The aim of the work/training contract is the training and vocational improvement of young people (15-26 years, 29 for women and graduates currently 29 to 32) through special training cycles and working activities in a company carried out simultaneously.
In connection with this type of contract, companies are given incentives and concessions; the contract can be changed to a permanent contract; and it is now possible to hire "by name", i.e. to activate hiring procedures other than straightforward placement.

"QUALIFICA" [SKILL LEVEL]

A term with several different meanings. The most usual are those involving the point of view of working life and the point of view of the employment contract.

The skill level indicates, on the one hand (qualifications for the job), the total baggage of vocational competence and skills a person has prior to entering working life, what he/she can do as a synthesis of knowledge and prior experience which are independent from the work relationship; it also means (skill level on the job) the tasks assigned to a worker according to his own employment contract (i.e. turner, mechanic maintenance technician, etc.) or the contractual category he/she belongs to (specialized worker, etc.).
What characterizes vocational qualification is the fact that the contents of the skill level must be *socially recognized* and *formally certified*.
Socially recognized, by corresponding to implicit and explicit expectations of working life (the description of a skill level should involve, everywhere and for everyone, the same contents in terms of vocational skills).
Formally certified, insofar as the skills acquired must be verified through examinations set according to valid legislation and in such a way as to assess the candidate's suitability to exercise a specific vocational activity at the end of the training process.
Vocational skill levels have a relevant function when starting a job, in reference to the management of organizational changes within companies and of restructuration processes involving companies or productive sectors and, finally, in terms of workforce mobility within the country or in the social space of the European Community.
On the basis of current legislation, a vocational skill level can be acquired by means of:

- a diploma issued by State vocational institutions
- work/training contracts (in the sense intended by Article 3 point 7 of Law no. 863/86, at the end of the contracted period the employer is obligated to certify the activity carried out and the results obtained by the worker, communicating this certification to the relevant placement office);
- apprenticeship contracts in the sense of Law no. 25/55;
- determination of skill level on the basis of the tasks which the worker must effectively carry out;
- assessment of professional competence in the sense of Article 14 of Law no. 56/87;
- certificates issued by the Regions after final examinations at the end of vocational training courses in the sense of Article 14, 1 of Law no. 845/78.

Framework Law no. 845/78, reguating vocational training, gives the Regions the function of regulating with regional laws the modalities for the achievement of training objectives regarding vocational qualification.

"QUALIFICA DI FORMAZIONE PROFESSIONALE" [VOCATIONAL TRAINING QUALIFICATION]

Cedefop conference, 22 May 1992

The result, expected and officially recognized in conformity with legislation, regulations and conventions, of systematic vocational training with the aim of achieving the necessary and required vocational skills for access to a specific vocational activity.

"PROFESSIONALITÀ"
[PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND STATUS]

This is a purely Italian term, not easily translated into other languages.

It is a complex and multi-dimensional context.

"Professionalità" can be identified, depending on the context where the word is used, as a necessity to redefine the contribution of individuals to production; the means to acquire a more precise social identity; a criterion for the distribution of power in a company; a method to achieve better levels of productivity; a prerequisite to labour and productive systems planning; a method of analyzing emerging vocational figures and interpreting change.

"Professionalità", then, does not seem to be a simple attribute of work: it becomes a reference model and an analytical category for work activities.

CEDEFOP - European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

Systems and procedures of certification of qualifications in Italy
IFAP IRI
Nicola Fressura

CEDEFOP panorama

Berlin: CEDEFOP - European Centre for the
Development of Vocational Training, 1994

1994 - 100 pp. - 21,0 x 29,7 cm

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panorama

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In these publications the authors, after making brief reference to the characteristics of the general and vocational training systems in their countries, describe all aspects of how qualifications are certified:

- formulation and introduction of certificates, qualifications and diplomas: the relevant institutions, procedures, tripartite or joint consultation or decision-making commissions;
- access to qualifications: conditions, means, motives, channels;
- certifications: aims, contents, means, procedures;
- usefulness, use, trends and problems.

5016

National report